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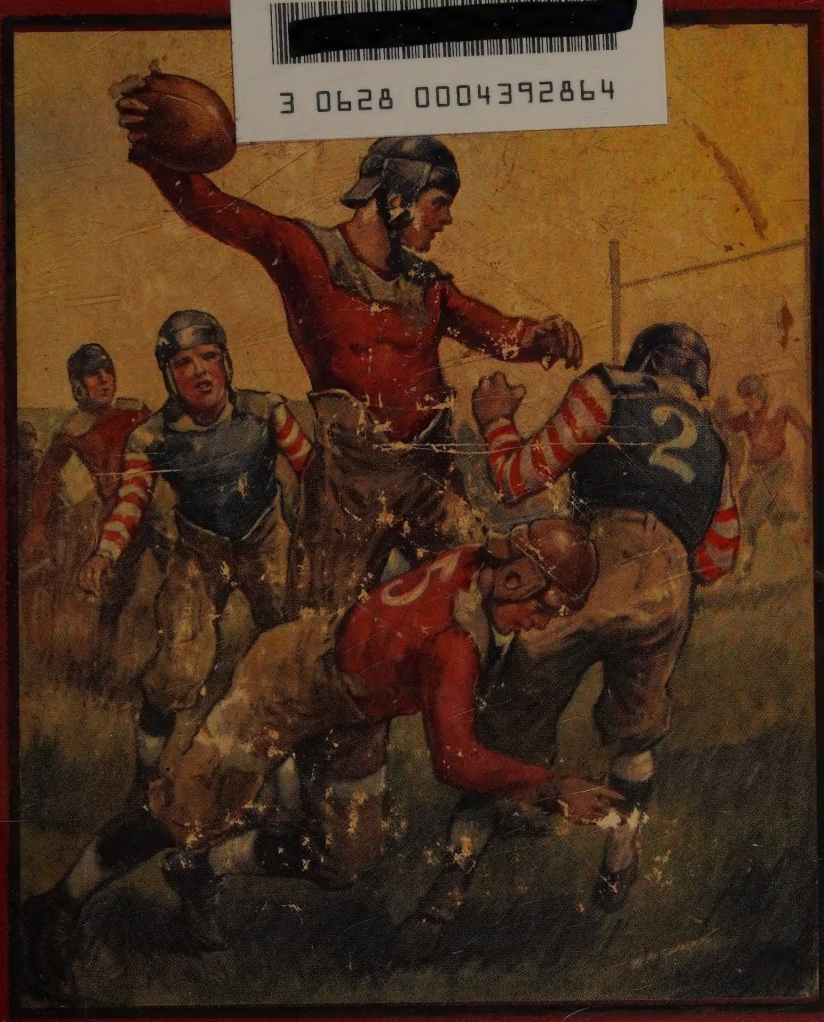

BY LEE WILLENBORG

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PREP SCRAPS

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By

LEE WILLENBORG

Author of "Old Ruddy"

Illustrated by

W. W. CLARKE

RAND McNALLY & COMPANY

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HRC
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To

"Hap" Crawford

Fine athlete, keen sportsman,
and enduring friend

DISCARDED

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FOREWORD

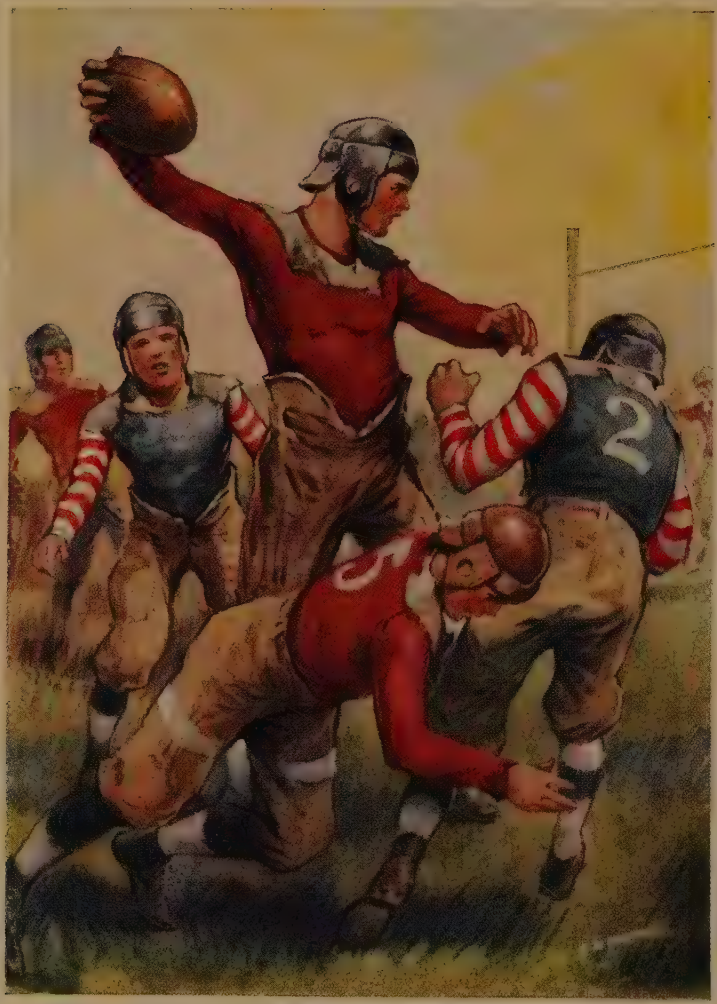
In presenting this volume to the boys of the United States—no age limit—the author feels obligated to offer a brief explanation.

An effort has been made to appeal to the best class of young Americans, but it must not be supposed that the appeal is based upon "preaching." Far from it. Things are very tersely pointed out, and this for one reason only: To help make American boys better sportsmen.

The author believes that too much store is set on "winning." He was a baseball coach once upon a time, and knows something of boys and boy-nature. "To play the game fairly"—that's the thing. And these stories are presented with that thought paramount.

The courtesy of *The American Boy* and the *Boys' Magazine,* in whose pages most of these stories have appeared, makes it possible to present them for the first time in book form.

THE AUTHOR



The way Randolph hurled the ball was a revelation

PREP SCRAPS

THE STRANGE CASE OF HALF—BACK HARLAN

When Mr. Jim Boles, late university athletic star, took up the coaching duties at St. James, there was much speculation. He was known as a "driver," and his sarcastic criticisms had scorched more than one young athlete. The pessimists predicted disaster, while the optimists held their breath; but Coach Boles fooled them all. He began by building up a basket-ball team that became extremely formidable as the season waned. Then, with the biggest baseball squad in the history of the school, and no less than thirty track-team candidates, the pessimists again began. Billy Andrews, the first-string pitcher, was among them.

"Sure, he made good with basket ball," admitted Billy grudgingly, "but he had only fourteen candidates to work with. Track and baseball is another thing entirely. We'll see."

As the season advanced, Billy had to admit that Mr. Boles knew something about baseball. This was a most generous admission—for Billy. Whenever praise was the subject, Bill had a trick of appropriating about 90 per cent for himself.

"Oh, hang the crêpe somewhere else!" said Dave Burke, the snappy shortstop who could think, move, and talk with equal speed.

The team was a little backward in development. Boles was patient, but became convinced that the team was an "in-and-outer."

St. James had been ignominiously routed by a near-by "hick" team, and the defeat rankled. There were only two games left on the schedule—Marstone and Hull. Coach Boles wanted those two games. So did the whole St. James team. St. James took the same delight in beating Marstone and Hull that Yale does in defeating Harvard and Princeton. So the night before the Marstone game the coach spoke his mind.

"We want this game tomorrow. I don't know whether you knew it before, but you know it now. The trouble is this: You fellows are in-and-outers. One game you look like a million dollars; the next game like a choice assortment of moth-eaten boobs. You'll have to go top speed the whole distance to beat that Marstone crowd, and don't forget it. Now—"; then followed a lot of personal instruction on defensive play built upon a knowledge of each Marstone batsman.

The game dragged along until the ninth inning, with Marstone one run to the good. St. James

had done no great amount of consecutive hitting. Suddenly, after two were down, St. James found the Marstone pitcher for three singles, and only the sharpest fielding kept them from tying the score. Billy Andrews, having reached first base on a very flukey single, grinned at the visiting pitcher.

"You're a lucky guy," he called. "Just keep on grooving that ball, an' you'll ride home in a hearse!"

"*You're* the lucky one," answered the Marstone pitcher. "You hit that one with your eyes shut."

He pitched two balls, and then looked over at Billy.

"What's the matter? Are you tied to that bag?" he asked sneeringly.

For some strange reason, this remark roused Billy into a fury. He put his head down as the Marstone pitcher wound up, and bolted for second. Nine catchers out of ten would have bluffed a throw, and have sought to run down the runner between third and home. But the Marstone catcher was the exception. Straight and true went the ball to the waiting second baseman, and Billy was tagged for the final out, ten feet from the bag. Marstone's outfielders came tearing in, and the crowd swarmed onto the field. Disconsolately,

Billy Andrews stalked off to the gym, sick with humiliation.

"You poor half-baked nut!" said Burke in a voice tense with anger, when Billy came in for his shower.

"Hail, the conquered bonehead comes!" announced Sid Harold, first baseman.

"Say, how do you get that way, Bill?" asked Ginger Knapp, one of the second-string pitchers.

"Why didn't you let that catcher's peg bounce off your dome? It wouldn't have hurt you a bit," softly remarked Bunny Pierce, the catcher.

"Yellow!" said third baseman Sam Keene.

That last epithet was the only one that hurt. Billy's retort was almost upon his lips when the voice of Coach Boles stilled the tumult.

"Cut out that chatter and get to the showers, boys."

Billy gave a voiceless prayer of thanks to his coach, and peeled off his clothes.

Within a day or two the anger of his team mates entirely disappeared. But Billy fancied they still felt resentful. As a result, he shunned them whenever possible, and practice hours found him working doggedly and not venturing to say a word. Secretly Billy had made up his mind that he would pitch and win against Hull or quit school.

"What's got into gabby Bill?" asked Sid Harold one afternoon after Billy had left the gym.

"Still sore over the prize boner he pulled last Saturday, I guess," said Burke, pulling on his stockings.

"No use taking it to heart like that," said Knapp.

Bunny laughed.

"His heart's all right. It's his vanity that got wounded," he said.

"He belongs with the idiots who 'rocked the boat' and the bugs who 'didn't know it was loaded,' " said Sam Keene.

"And yet he's a smart ball player, *usually,*" said Rube Porter, the left infielder.

"Well, grouching around disguised as the 'Silent Swede' won't make him any friends. He'd better forget that right now," said the second baseman, Dave Burke.

"What gets my goat is the way the coach handled it," Dave went on. "You know, Billy isn't very strong for him—says the coach knows the game *pretty* well. Bill is sure generous with praise!"

"Bill has always been stuck on himself," said Porter. "Maybe this jolt will knock a little sense into him."

It did.

He pitched a masterly game against Hull, and St. James returned the winner—2 to 0. There was nothing undeserved or lucky about it. St. James had outplayed, outgamed, and outtricked them, and was bound to win. But the thing that was hard to understand was Billy's changed attitude. Up to the minute the last man was retired in the ninth, he was as mute as a clam. When the game was over, his team mates expected to hear him all over the place. To their surprise, he was smilingly quiet. He thanked each team mate personally for his support, and conducted himself like a gentleman, happy, but unassuming.

"Do you suppose it's permanent?" asked Sam, referring to Billy's change of front.

"Search me," answered Dave.

The train was chalked up thirty minutes late when the boys reached the station. There wasn't enough time to go uptown to the movies, so they sat about doing "close harmony."

Coach Boles and student-manager Hobe Stuart found them seated on their suit cases, tired but happy. Then, during a pause, Billy Andrews suddenly rose to his feet.

"Fellows," he said, "I suppose you haven't forgotten last Saturday when I lost my mind and tried to steal with the bases full. I'll remember

it long after you've forgotten it. I haven't said a word to any one about this before because I made up my mind we'd beat Hull or I would quit school.

"I expected an awful call-down from the coach, and when I didn't get it I couldn't help wondering a little. I learned more about myself during the past week than I ever knew before. I've been a swell-head, and I know it now. It takes nine players to win a ball game. It takes only one to lose it, as I found out last Saturday. I'm off of that swell-head stuff for life. This game today came near being my last with St. James, and I'm glad we won it.

"But there is one thing I'd like to know, and that is: Why didn't the coach call me for that bone I pulled last Saturday?"

There was an expectant hush as he finished, and all eyes were turned toward Coach Boles. He smiled at Billy, and then at the rest of the crowd.

"It's a 'long story,' as they say in the story-books," he began. "But I'll try and boil it down for you.

"During my first year on the college team we had two things that most colleges would give a good deal for: a great team and a highly-thought-of coach. I say highly-thought-of because

he came there from another college and had a great reputation. We knew nothing about him, but we soon learned two things: He knew football, and had the wickedest tongue we'd ever heard. He could say more cutting things in a minute than any man I ever knew—before or since.

"At first we used to be pretty much fussed when he bawled us out. But after a while some of the older men used to do things wrong purposely just to hear him rave. Up to the very last minute before a game he would be as irritable as a bear with a sore head. But once the game started he was cold and dead as a piece of ice. All through the game he would be as quiet as a clam. But after! He could remember every mistake, every misplay, and just who was to blame. Oh, how he used to roast us!

"Well, we went along for a couple of weeks nicely enough. Then, one afternoon, a tall, well-built chap came out on the field and asked for a chance.

" 'What do you play?' the coach asked.

" 'Half back,' was the answer.

" 'Any experience?' barked the coach.

" 'No, sir.'

"The coach stepped back and looked him over. Then, in a smooth, cool voice, he asked, 'Just what is

it that causes you to believe you can play a half-back position?'

"It wasn't the words so much as the tone—that biting, sarcastic voice. The new candidate shifted his feet and started and stuttered, and was just about to say something when the coach said, 'You're a bit slow on top. Maybe you're faster on your feet, even if you do stand pigeon-toed.'

"Then he walked away and left the newcomer without another word. The new candidate got a place on the freshman team, and within a week he tore the varsity line to shreds in practice.

" 'What's your name?' asked the coach after the new candidate had smashed through left tackle for seven yards.

" 'Harlan.'

" 'Go wash your face and report at the training table in the morning.'

"Harlan had been on the varsity string just a week when he was put into a game. It was a minor game, of course, but the way he ate up ground was a caution. The papers puffed him to the clouds, the undergraduates worshiped him, and the coach actually smiled at him. There were a lot of little things, and some few larger ones, that made Harlan quite fond of himself. Without going into detail, he got a fine case of swell-head.

It never seemed to occur to him that it takes eleven men to make a football team. He began to take advantage of the favors the coach extended, and the next thing we knew the balance of the team was badly upset. He shirked in practice; he alibied himself out of things that he had done wrong. And then he began to patronize the coach. Right there the coach should have called him on the carpet and given it to him straight from the shoulder. That was where the coach was wrong, not intentionally, but wrong nevertheless. The coach knew football, but he didn't know human nature.

"Well, we got along toward the latter part of the season. There were two games left on the schedule, both hard ones. The first of these was away from home, and we left two days before the date. The opposing college men were sportsmen all right, and treated us royally. Harlan spread-eagled quite a bit, and, being known through the newspapers, of course had a fuss made over him.

"The day of the game was raw and cold, with muddy turf to play on. Neither side scored in the first half, but in the third quarter our opponents recovered a fumble and, after two trials at rushing, kicked a field goal. So we went into the final quarter with the score 3 to 0 against us.

"The ball changed hands a couple of times, and finally we got it about thirty yards from the goal. The quarter gave the signal for a set of sequence plays which he planned to run off. It was Harlan's signal, but when the ball was snapped Harlan was charging toward the line. Our opponents got the ball and nearly scored with it. We never got another chance, and left the field whipped, 3 to 0.

"I thought I'd heard the coach use language before, but what he told Harlan in the gym after that game was awful. After it was over, Harlan sat down on a bench and cried like a child. The rest of us kept off him. Maybe if we had given him a little sympathy just then, it might have done a world of good. But we were all pretty sore at the time, and felt he had got just what he deserved from the coach.

"The next week was a trying one for sure. The team was on edge physically, and we had practically no scrimmage work. Harlan was gabby as usual. You'd have thought the calling he'd got from the coach would have slowed him down a bit. Not so. He was as full of talk as a parrot. He knew his gabbing bothered us, and he kept it up continually. The coach looked at him a couple of times in a way that would have set me thinking if I'd been in Harlan's shoes. He might

have suspected some clever scheme in that cold, clever brain of the coach, but he didn't. He went along with a conceited assurance that put the edge on the team's nerves.

"Well, we got to the field on the day of the game without any mishap, and the names of the first string were called off. To everybody's surprise, Harlan's name was omitted. Before he could say a word, the team trotted out on the field, Harlan following at a slow walk. He was stunned. We won the toss, and our opponents kicked off. Harlan lay in his blanket cursing to himself. I was only a sub then, myself, and sat wrapped in my blanket right beside him. Before the game had gone on five minutes, Rogers, who was playing Harlan's half made a bad fumble.

"'The cross-eyed idiot!' Harlan grunted.

"Just then the coach came along and squatted down beside him.

"'I'm ready, Coach,' said Harlan, springing up, thinking the coach was about to send him in.

"'Ready for what?' the coach drawled. 'Another of your famous "I-forgot-the-signal" plays?'

"Harlan promptly sat down. The opposition had recovered the ball, and started a fast and aggressive attack. They made gain after gain, and each time Harlan groaned and gritted his

teeth. As they got within five yards of our goal, he cried out, 'For heaven's sake, sir, let me go in!'

"But the coach only smiled, a slow, aggravating sort of smile. He didn't say a word. Two more plays, and they scored.

"I'm not going to describe the game in detail. We got two touchdowns in the third period, and another in the fourth. Harlan had begged a dozen times to go in, but all he got was that puzzling smile. Just after the last score, and only about three minutes of playing time left, the coach said, 'Harlan, take Rogers' place, and kick goal. Boles,' turning to me, 'you take Harlan's place as soon as he finishes his goal.'

" 'Kick goal?' asked Harlan, puzzled.

" 'That's what I said,' said the coach softly.

" 'But I never kicked a goal in my life,' Harlan answered.

" 'It isn't at all necessary that you should. We shall win anyway. A lot of people came out here today to see the great Harlan, and it seems a shame to disappoint them. Run along, there's a good chap,' said the coach in a tone one might use to a stupid child.

"The crowd had been calling for Harlan intermittently all afternoon, and when he trotted across the field a loud cheer rang out. But it was short-

lived. He failed at goal, as he must have known he would. As soon as he kicked, I ran out. I didn't get much of a cheer, but believe me, I wouldn't have traded places with him.

"He didn't wait for the finish, which came a few minutes later, and by the time we forced a way to the showers he was almost dressed. Our whole team was buzzing with questions about Harlan and why the coach had kept him out of the game. Just as Harlan was about to leave the shower room, the coach came in.

"'Ah, Harlan, leaving so soon?' he drawled.

"'I can't get away soon enough to suit me,' said Harlan.

"'Nor me,' the coach snapped with a sudden change of manner.

"Harlan swaggered to the doorway. There he turned and said, 'I'll be on another college team next year, Mr. Swell-head Coach, and my playing will lick you to a frazzle,' between his teeth.

"'Not if you play as you did last Saturday!' answered the coach.

"And Harlan stumbled out with the mocking laughter of the coach ringing in his ears."

"I've thought about Harlan's case a good many times since then," said Boles after a pause, "and I think our coach was wrong. He broke Harlan's

spirit by his sarcasm and sneers. If he had called Harlan good and strong, and then forgotten it, things might have been different: The cold, calculated revenge cut Harlan to the marrow. And I made up my mind I'd never let that happen to me. That's why I didn't say a word to you, Billy when you stole second with the bases full."

The team looked at Coach Boles, and at one another. This was a side of him that they had never seen.

"To win is a fine thing, boys; but no victory is worth the breaking of a team mate's heart," he said.

The whistle of the train broke the stillness of the summer twilight. The team picked up their suit cases and boarded the train, bumping and jostling each other good naturedly. And as the train pulled out they were crowded on the back platform singing, "For he's a jolly good fellow."

THE "CHEATER"

Hod Williams was the only back who was in a class with the rush line. For the other three backfield positions a dozen different candidates had been tried out and there didn't seem to be an ounce of difference in their effectiveness. Coach Boles had tried both regular ends and all the substitutes in sight. But to no avail. Then he began to build the attack around Hod Williams. That didn't work, either, because Hod was so fast that he either ran away from the ball or ran into his interference.

The team hammered away and won its first two games, which didn't mean anything in particular, because they were "set-ups" pure and simple. The forward pass was St. James's method of attack; that and sending Hod around the end—by himself. Of course, it was spectacular and all that, but a stiff opposition would never be beaten that way. Coach Boles knew it, as did every boy at St. James except perhaps a few "study-hounds" who didn't know the difference between a goal post and a tackle buck.

It was in the latter part of October that the coach took Vic Stanage from left tackle and put him at full. Vic was fast and rangy, and, though he was seconds slower than Hod, he still had enough speed to lead Hod past the scrimmage line. Vic was as green as grass at back-field play, but he was learning fast. A sub replaced him at tackle, took hold in style, and things began to look up. Coach Boles actually smiled twice in one afternoon—at least, so the optimists said, though the "crêpe-hangers" denied it.

On this particular afternoon there was a new face in the field, a tow-headed, lean, blue-eyed face, that went in at left half on the scrub. Nobody paid any attention to him until he caught a varsity punt and came up the field like a runaway engine. He stiff-armed three tacklers, and dodged and ducked through the rest of the varsity, and the next thing they knew he was standing behind the goal posts.

Coach Boles's eyes snapped, but he didn't say a word. The varsity looked at one another as if they'd been caught stealing fruit, and there was enough mortification floating about to cover all the grass on the campus. "Violet" Carroll—so christened because of his modesty—ran up to the newcomer and asked his name. Then Violet

turned to the gang in the stand and called for "three times three, with a Randolph!"

Coach Boles put Randolph into the varsity back field, and after five minutes of signal drill the scrimmage was renewed. He didn't carry the ball for at least a dozen plays, but the way he led the interference was beautiful. When he did get the ball, he ran only thirty yards and stopped of his own accord.

"Go on with it!" Vic yelled.

But Randolph only smiled and shook his head.

"I don't believe I'm dead sure of my signals," he said. "I turned in too soon. Let's try that again."

Of course, he was a fixture after that.

It's an odd thing, but the morale of the St. James team doubled over night. The psychology sharps might explain it easily; St. James didn't bother about that part of it. There was any amount of speculation about Vic going back to left tackle, but he didn't go. He stayed behind the line, and with Randolph and Hod Williams in there the back field began to look visibly better. Coach Boles put on a number of new plays, and there was no more scrimmage for two days.

The Friday before the Mt. Pleasant game the scrub team, fifteen strong, was turned loose to try

out the varsity's forward passes. From the same formation, the varsity used three passes of different lengths. Of course, the scrubs knew the formations and where the ball was going. But they looked as helpless as rats in a trap. They thought they'd seen some forward passing, but the way Randolph hurled that ball was a revelation. Not these great, long passes that make good about once in ten, but short, fast ones that didn't travel more than eight or ten yards. And fast! The ball would smack against the chests of the ends and backs so you could hear it clear across the field.

Mt. Pleasant had a good team to send against St. James, and they sent it! For two periods they played St. James to a standstill. The pessimists were biting their finger nails. Queer thing about these "crêpe-hangers:" they never seem to have any faith. Coach Boles hadn't used Hod or Randolph, and Vic was back at left tackle. But the "sob sisters" had forgotten that. They received a big surprise when Hod and Randolph went in in the third quarter. Vic went to left half, and then the circus began. That back field did just about as they liked, but they didn't use any fancy plays. After Randolph and Vic had torn the line to pieces and Hod had run the opposing ends blind, the back field was excused for the day. St. James was 14

points to the good, so there wasn't much chance to lose. Mt. Pleasant scored just a few minutes before play ended, and nobody begrudged them the score. They were a clean, game team.

That night at the bonfire celebration Coach Boles took Fat Watkins aside and asked how he'd like to go up to Greenville the next Saturday and watch Hull.

"Sure, I'll go, Coach," Fat agreed, "but I don't quite see why you select me. I'm no football sharp."

"No," said the coach, "you're not. But that isn't your fault. If you were as good on physical performance as you are on formations, you'd be a dandy. Now, next Saturday's game isn't going to trouble us much. Worcester is 'way below par this year. So I want you and Ballard to watch Hull. Hull will have to extend herself to win, and there's just a chance that she will spill something. Keep your eyes and ears open, and your mouth shut. I'll explain to Ballard that he is to watch the line. You look after the back field."

"Yes, sir, I understand," Fat answered.

Dick Ballard was known as a fellow with a wonderful gift for silence. He and Fat were halfway to Greenville before he said a word.

"Say, Fat," he asked suddenly, "didn't I see

Randolph's name in a high school line-up last year?"

"Maybe," Fat replied. "Randolph isn't such an uncommon name. It doesn't follow that he's the same chap that's playing with us."

"No," said Dick, "of course, it doesn't. But Ranny got most of his football education before he reached St. James, that's a cinch."

"I won't argue that," Fat answered.

After a minute, Dick said, "Nobody seems to know where he came from, nor anything else about him."

"That's to his credit," Fat replied. "I hate these fresh birds that spill their family history all over the place."

"Sure," said Dick, "so do I. But it seems kinda queer, that's all. A guy that can play football as well as Ranny ought to be better known."

Coach Boles was mistaken about Greenville. Hull didn't have to extend herself much to win. As far as any new plays were concerned, she didn't uncover a thing. Dick and Fat sat in the Hull stand and took it all in, but they learned nothing new—that is, nothing about Hull.

There were two Hull students behind them, who kept up a running fire of comment. Fat and Dick didn't pay much attention to their chatter

until the fourth period, when a sub went in at left half for Hull.

"Who's that?" asked one of the chaps behind them.

"That's Marsh," answered the second one. "Came from Brookfield High."

"Where's Brookfield?" asked number one.

"Western part of the state."

Marsh tore off ten yards through left tackle.

"Good, isn't he?" asked number two.

"Yeh," answered his friend. Then he went on, "seems to me I remember something about a mix-up Marsh was in. He was telling Hobe Miller about it. There was quite a row, and a fellow named Randolph got expelled."

"I heard that story," said number two. "It was reported that Randolph cheated in an exam. He blamed Marsh for peaching on him."

"Wonder if there's anything to it?" asked number two.

"Hard to say," his friend answered. "There goes Marsh—over for a touchdown."

Dick and Fat looked at each other. Dick shook his head and put his finger over his lips.

"Speaking of Randolph," said number one, "there's a new back at St. James this year by that name. They say he's a bear. Coach Pratt is

sending Hobe Miller and Jack Ainsworth up to Barnhill to watch the St. James team play next Saturday."

"Not the same guy that Marsh got mixed up with likely," said number two.

"Why not?" asked number one.

"Well, if a fellow got expelled for cribbing, he wouldn't choose a school so near home. If he did, he'd have enough sense to change his name."

The game ended soon after that. Dick and Fat wandered uptown. They had covered five blocks before Dick had anything to say.

"Well," he asked, "what are *we* going to do about it?"

"Nothing," Fat answered. "If Ranny got in bad at Brookfield, it's tough, but it isn't up to us, that I can see. He's been square at St. James. And, another thing, we've only got gossip for evidence. I know Ranny, and the prattle of a couple of Hull undergrads wouldn't convince me."

"Somehow I've got a hunch that their 'prattle' is true, for once," Dick remarked.

"It's possible, of course," Fat admitted. "Even if it is true, then what?"

"That's just the point," said Dick. "There are enough snobs at St. James to make Ranny's life miserable. How much value would he have as a

football player, with a gang of 'lily-whites' sneering at him?"

"Huh!" said Fat. "That depends on the stuff that's in him. The snobs would never make me quit."

"You don't know whether they would or not," Dick answered. "It's one thing to promise yourself what you'd do in a certain situation. But when that situation arrives, that's something else."

"Well, what are we going to do?" Fat asked.

"Nothing—yet," Dick replied.

"I don't like it," Fat said. "We'd better tell Coach Boles confidentially, and then it's up to him."

"Nix!" Dick barked. "I won't spill anything like that on the quiet. I either stand behind my statement, or I don't make it. You can do as you like."

Dick was right, as Fat decided after a minute's thought. "There's a lot of trouble caused in this world by fellows spilling gossip, and making it look like facts," he told himself.

"But you said you thought those Hull birds were right, for once," he said.

"I still think so," Dick answered.

The report the boys made to Coach Boles was a short one. Hull hadn't used anything they hadn't

seen, and St. James went right ahead and worked on the new signals that the coach handed out. Ranny had played a whale of a game while Fat and Dick were up watching Hull. Vic Stanage was all smiles.

"How does Hull look?" he asked.

It was the following Tuesday afternoon, and the squad was limbering up.

"They've got a team, Vic," Fat answered. "We'll have to go at top speed."

"Any new faces?"

Dick flashed a look at Fat. Randolph was standing beside him.

"Yes," Fat replied, "but nothing startling except a new back named Marsh. Comes from up state—Brookfield, I believe."

"Why, that's *your* home town, Ranny," said Vic.

"I played on the same team with him for three years," Ranny said easily. "He's good, Vic."

"That makes your hunch sort of hollow," Fat said to Dick a minute later.

But Dick only smiled and shook his head.

Fat remembered what he'd heard those Hull fellows say about their coach sending a couple of scouts up to Barnhill to watch the game the following Saturday. He had forgotten the names they mentioned, but that made no difference. He

wouldn't have known them anyway. He had his own idea about who would be sent, but he didn't say a word to any one except Dick.

"Did you get a good look at that bird Marsh last Saturday?" he asked.

"Sure," Dick answered. "I'd know him anywhere."

"Then take a look at the fellow in the tan coat."

"By gad! You're right!" said Dick.

Well, St. James went ahead and played their game, and won it handily.

"Hull will use this mix-up of Ranny's," said Dick to Fat on the way to the training table that night.

"Of course," Fat agreed. "And they'll wait until the fifty-ninth second to do it. Anything to throw us into the air."

"I'd like to get the dope to Coach Boles," said Dick.

"We've discussed all that before, and decided to stay off," Fat answered.

The next game—the last before the final with Hull—was going to be a stiff one. St. James would have plenty of opposition in Walnut Hill, and would need all her skill to win—all, that is, except the special plays they always reserve for Hull. So that week proved a busy one, indeed.

Ranny hadn't even hinted at the thing that was always more or less in Fat's mind. He had not made a confidant of Dick, either. The team was going like a machine, and everybody was happy. All this time Dick and Fat had by no means been "glooming" over what Hull would do with Ranny's case; they were too busy for that. But any chance they might have had to forget it, was ruined just before the Walnut Hill game. The team was getting into its football clothes when the field-house door opened, and there, framed in the doorway, stood Marsh.

"Look who's here!" Fat piped.

"Greetings, St. James!" Marsh answered. "Where's Randolph?"

"Hello, Marsh," said Ranny, going toward him.

They shook hands.

"Another vacation?" asked Ranny.

"Yeh," answered Marsh easily. "I didn't get much dope last Saturday. I'm carrying a bum shoulder, and Coach Pratt has an idea I can be of some service scouting. But I'm not much good at it."

Vic Stanage came over and was introduced, and a few minutes later Marsh left.

"Well," said Dick, "I'll say one thing for this Marsh; he's sure got a crust."

"He seemed friendly enough with Ranny," said Fat. "Maybe our dope won't materialize after all."

"Ranny's a fox," said Dick. "He wouldn't let Marsh see how he felt."

"Of course not," Fat answered.

After a minute, Dick remarked, "Marsh didn't come up here to watch formations, that's a cinch."

"Still believe Ranny got in wrong at Brookfield?"

"Yep," answered Dick.

But Fat couldn't tell whether he really believed it, or whether he was just bullheaded.

Then Dick added, "I wish this Marsh was going to play opposite me in the line next Saturday."

"Well," Fat replied, "I haven't any reason to love this bird, but I wouldn't wish that on him."

Walnut Hill had a good team—fast, strong, and tricky. St. James won, 7 to 0, and might have added more if they hadn't been ordered to stay on the defensive. Dick played like a wild man, which was a little foolish, Fat thought.

"Why this 'desperate Desmond' stuff?" he asked. "Marsh is up there in the stands, and Hull will lay for you."

Dick laughed.

"He didn't come up here for that, as I told you before," he said. "Can't you get it through your dome that Marsh was pulling a grand-stand play?

Coming up here with the friendly stuff to throw us off our guard? Wake up!"

Of course that was possible, but it didn't sound altogether reasonable. Besides, Fat hated to suspect everybody. He wasn't that kind of chap.

The next week passed quickly. No one was hurt much in the Walnut Hill game, and everybody was working hard. The team looked good, the student body was full of confidence, and Coach Boles was quiet—as usual. For once, the annual "bear stories" from Hull were absent.

"They don't need 'bear stories,'" said Dick. "They're going to put one over that will knock us loose from the best half back we ever had."

"I hope you're wrong, you gloom-passer!" Fat answered.

Thursday night—the limit of time for protesting any player—came and went. No protest.

Friday night the Hull squad arrived. Still no protest.

Saturday at lunch time a special delivery letter came for Coach Boles at the training table. Everyone watched, of course, but Dick and Fat were the ones who held their breath. Coach Boles excused himself and left the table. A minute later they heard him at the 'phone. Then the front door slammed. Dick muttered to Fat to "come on," and

followed the coach. They saw him enter the field house just as they got outside. Before they were halfway to the field house they saw Coach Pratt, of Hull, going in.

"That settles it," said Dick, and turned back.

But Fat stopped him.

"Wait a minute," he said. "We've got to find out what's being pulled off here."

They kept on and reached the field house a few minutes later. Dick walked right in, and Fat followed. The two coaches were standing near the fireplace. Coach Boles looked up.

"Well?" he asked.

"Coach, we didn't tell you everything we heard at Greenville the day you sent us up there to scout on Hull," said Dick, without flinching.

"Has the thing you wish to report anything to do with Randolph?" asked Coach Boles.

"It certainly has," said Dick. "It's got a lot to do with him."

"Sit down," said the coach.

He had a letter in his hand, which he gave to Coach Pratt. For about three minutes there wasn't a sound in the room but the crackling of the grate fire.

Coach Pratt handed the letter back, and asked, "Are you going to use it?"

"Not unless you fellows force me to," answered the St. James coach.

Coach Pratt laughed.

"I guess you win, Boles," he said.

Coach Boles watched him walk across the room and out of the door. Then he turned to Dick and passed the letter to him.

"Office of Superintendent of Schools
Brookfield, ——

My Dear Mr. Boles:

In answering your letter of recent date, I shall have to go back two years. Randolph and Marsh were both candidates for left half back on the Brookfield High School team. Randolph won the place, incidentally earning Marsh's hatred. This hatred was intensified by Randolph's being elected football captain last fall. Marsh was again the defeated candidate. Last June Marsh brought a charge against Randolph for cheating in an examination. There were no other witnesses, and it was simply a case of one boy's word against another's. Randolph admitted the charge, which I personally regard as good sportsmanship. If he had denied it, the case would have been dropped, a fact which Randolph knew perfectly well. As it was, we had to expel Randolph. There was no other procedure possible.

I am putting a special stamp on this, as my neglect of your letter was unavoidable. I hope it reaches you in time.

Cordially yours,
Arthur B. Carnes

Dick handed the letter back.

"How did you guess, Coach?" he asked.

"I didn't," Coach Boles answered. "Randolph told me the story before he went out to try for the St. James team. He didn't know whether the rest of the team would stand for the story. He knew it would get out with Marsh at Hull. It's a pity there isn't a law to control these revengeful chaps."

"Do you think Ranny will slip again?" Fat asked.

"Hardly," answered the coach. "He's learned his lesson, and a mighty bitter one it was."

"Was Hull going to protest him?" asked Dick.

"I don't know," said Mr. Boles. "But I suspected it, so I got the inside story. I don't propose to lose a first-class back without a fight."

"Coach," said Dick rising, "you'd have done the same thing for the poorest sub on the squad."

The coach smiled.

"That's mighty square of you, Dick."

When they got outside, Dick said, "Well, that's settled. Ranny will run that Hull bunch blind, or I miss my guess."

Ranny went great guns for the first ten minutes. But a mass play on tackle did for him. When the gang piled off, Ranny lay still. His leg was broken. Dick was wild. He was benched for unnecessary

roughness. So St. James finished out the game minus two of their best men, winning 19 to 0.

Marsh looked for Ranny after the game, but, of course, he couldn't see him because Ranny was in the hospital.

"Tell Randolph I'm sorry," Marsh told Dick, in a thick voice.

"I guess you learned something today," said Dick.

"I sure did," he answered. "Revenge is a poor game the way I played it."

"We knew all about that Brookfield scandal long ago," Dick said.

"The deuce you did!" Marsh exclaimed.

"Sure," Dick answered.

"And you stood for it?" Marsh questioned.

"Why not? Anybody is likely to slip. Ranny had his lesson, and I'd rather tie to him than most of these sainted guys that were never tempted."

"You're a square sport," said Marsh. "Will you shake hands?"

So they shook. Marsh looked over toward the campus where the undergrads were swarming, full of joy over the late victory.

"It's a great life," Dick remarked.

"Yes," Marsh answered, "it is—if you play square."

SHANNON'S STRATEGY

There was a crowd of boys in Al Macklin's room. It was a wild sort of night, black as a pocket, and a fitful wind that lashed the rain against the windows with a swishing rattle.

Ginger Knapp came in, his raincoat and hat dripping.

"Greetings, loafers!" he remarked pleasantly. "I've just come from Steve Shannon's room. He is gnawing his finger nails off over the weather."

Ginger threw his raincoat into a corner and sat down on the couch.

"What's the weather got to do with it?" Al asked.

"He's afraid it will gum up the tennis courts. You vulgarians are so devoted to baseball that you seem absolutely stupid about tennis," he answered airily.

"Steve's a fuss button," Al grunted.

"And a rattling good tennis player," Fos Kelly remarked.

"Right-o!" said Dave Garrett. "He's taught me a lot."

"So that's why you didn't come out for baseball this year," Al said.

"For once in your life you're wrong, Al," said Ginger.

He paused, and favored Al with a grin. Then he went on, "Have you ever noticed, in your prowlings, a photograph of a beautiful lady on Steve's dresser?"

Dave hit him with a pillow.

"Rot!" he growled.

"It's Steve's sister," Ginger explained, dodging a book that Dave threw at him.

"So?" said Fos. "The great footballer—Dave Garrett—has gone soft over the tennis captain's sister? How have the mighty fallen!"

"You silly ass!" Dave said, with a sheepish grin.

"You see?" Ginger asked. "He admits it."

"Where did you meet her, Dave?" Al asked.

"Ah," Fos cut in, "a meaty question! Listen, roughnecks. Dave hasn't met her. He's downy over her picture that Steve has on his dresser. Oh, boy!" And he rolled over on Al's bed in a fit of laughter.

"Go ahead," growled Dave. "Use all the clever stuff you've got. You can't get my goat."

"How does the team look?" Al asked.

"Very fair," answered Dave. "Sanderson is as good as Steve; and Holton is even better, I think. He and Steve are paired and—"

"She's coming down for the Hull match," Ginger interrupted.

"She will wear a red, red rose," said Fos solemnly.

Dave flashed a look at him that wasn't friendly.

"If I thought—" Dave began; then he halted the sentence in mid-air.

"And the king looked at his handmaiden, and saw that she was very fair," said Ginger.

"And the king said, 'Ho, slave! Bring forth the milk-white palfrey! And see to it that—'" Fos began.

Then Dave leaped upon Fos. The bed groaned and cracked under their struggles. Al finally grabbed them by the heels and pulled them both to the floor.

"Cut it out," he ordered.

Fos and Ginger decided they needed food, and left for Morey's, giving a lot of advice to Dave from the doorway. Somehow, Al couldn't forget the look Dave had shot at Fos when Fos spoke about the "red, red rose." There wasn't any friendliness in that look. Al and Dave talked tennis a while, and then Dave left. There wasn't any use speculating about things. If there was any bad feeling between Dave and Fos, it would take tangible shape sooner or later.

Dave's tennis form remained steady, so he probably wasn't mooning over Steve's sister to any extent, Al decided.

Then one morning, a notice appeared in the porch of Fellowship Dorm. It was Fos' work, Al knew at a glance.

> Tennis Candidate would appreciate advice leading to recovery of poise destroyed recently by gazing too long at a photograph.
>
> Address, Lovelorn,
> Care of the *Beetle*

Art Gerlock, editor of the Beetle, was reading this notice when Al came along.

"Rather a witty bit of stuff," Art said after Al read it.

"Wonder which particular candidate these birds are shooting at," Al replied.

"Inside dope," said Art. "Some fellow has spilt something."

"Sure," Al answered, "but who spilled it, and what was it?"

"Some question!" Art commented.

Al didn't have more than the normal amount of curiosity. But he made up his mind to have a look at that photograph. So that night he went over to Steve's room. Steve was taping the handle of a tennis racket.

"Patching up the old war club, eh?" Al said.

"Hello, Al," he answered, "come in and sit down."

Al noted the photograph immediately. He couldn't honestly say she looked like Steve, but there *was* a resemblance. They talked a while about nothing in particular.

Then Al said, "How's Dave doing with the felt-covered pills?"

"Very well," Steve answered.

It was a silly question, of course, Al knew. No captain would be foolish enough to sob about one of his team, unless something mighty serious was wrong.

"He never struck me as having the tennis temperament," Al said.

"Why so?" Steve asked.

"Well, he's too cold, for one thing," Al answered. "As a football player he was like a machine. Get me right, I'm not knocking Dave."

Steve was silent for a minute. Al kept looking at the photograph. She was a ripping pretty girl, all right, he thought to himself.

Steve said, "Don't know but what you're right. Dave isn't what you'd call a fiery player."

"No nerves at all, eh?" Al asked.

"None that I've ever noticed," he answered.

This stuff of Fos and Ginger was all moonshine, Al told himself. If Dave had been as dippy over this girl as they pretended, he would be showing it somehow.

Ginger met Al later that night at Morey's.

"I saw you coming out of Steve's room, didn't I?" he asked.

"Yeh," Al answered.

"The photograph *is* a corker, isn't it?"

"Yes, but does it look like her?"

"To a tick," he replied.

"Oh, so you know her?"

Ginger nodded.

"So does Fos," he said, and gave Al a knowing look.

Al thought he understood—then. But he didn't. He had put two and two together and made six instead of four.

"You birds shouldn't ride Dave too far," he said. "You might hurt his game."

"You mean tennis, I suppose?" Ginger said.

"Sure," Al answered. "What else?"

Ginger looked at him as if he was considering something.

"I don't believe you know the inside of this thing, Al," he said. "Don't play your hunch, that's my advice."

"No chance," Al answered. "Fos and Dave can handle their business without my help."

Well, it was a nice tangle, any way one looked at it. Ginger thought Al was about to cut in; Al hadn't the least idea of doing so. He never "welshed" on a pal, and if he could have helped Dave, he'd have done it like a shot. But not where a girl was concerned—girls were not his game. Anything he'd have done would likely have gummed the works—that was his thought. So he kept his hands off.

The Hull match was only four days away, and Al saw Steve having a talk with Coach Boles. By Steve's expression there was trouble brewing. The tennis and baseball and track squads were all at one training table and, of course, he saw Steve at least three times a day.

Steve said to Al that night, "Dave's in a slump."

"Serious?"

"Well," he answered, "I don't know."

"You're borrowing trouble," said Al. "He'll come through all right. I've often seen him that way in football. Don't worry."

"My sister is coming up for the Hull match," Steve went on. "She knows Fos Kelly and Ginger Knapp. I suppose she will be all right with those chaps looking after her."

"She planned to see the Hull match some time ago probably," Al remarked.

"Yes," he answered. "How did *you* know?"

"Oh, I heard Ginger and Fos talking about it," Al replied indifferently. Then he added, "I wish she wasn't coming up."

"That's a queer sort of remark," he said.

"Yes, I know it sounds queer. And I guess I shouldn't have said it, because I can't explain it."

Steve gave Al a queer look.

"Look here," Al said, angry at himself for making a foolish remark, "are there any of your friends—at St. James, I mean—that are crazy about your sister?"

"How should I know?" Steve countered.

"Well," Al said, getting to his feet, "mooning around over a photograph may help a fellow's tennis game, and again, maybe not."

For a minute Steve didn't grasp the significance of this remark. Then he laughed.

"I see," he said.

"No, I don't believe you do," Al answered.

"You don't understand, Al," Steve said.

"Maybe not, but—oh, what's the use?"

"Listen, old man," Steve replied, "I'll tell you the whole thing after the Hull match. Is that fair?"

"Perfectly fair," Al answered.

He felt like kicking himself for getting mixed up in this business. As he said before, girls were not his game, and he should have had enough sense, he told himself, to get out while the getting was good. Steve thought him a boor; Ginger was giving him the laugh; so was Fos. He turned to Steve.

"If it's all the same to you, Steve," Al said, "I'd rather not hear any more about it, now or after the Hull match. I've made an ass of myself, and I'm through."

And he turned and stalked off.

When Al said he was through, he meant it. The baseball team would be up at Melham, and as he was still on the team the tennis match would be one of the things he'd miss. Well, he wasn't sorry. He had let his curiosity get the best of him. It wouldn't happen again. But early Friday morning a wire came from the Melham manager. There had been a cloud-burst, and Melham had to cancel the game. The baseball squad scattered, for there would be no practice until Monday.

Al unpacked his grips, and was on the way to the gym, when he met Steve.

"Al," he said, "Fos and Ginger are trying to put something over. I don't know what it is, but I'm going to block it. Will you help?"

Al told him what happened in his room.

"There's some feeling between Dave and Fos. They're both good friends of mine, Steve," he said. "I'd do anything I could for you, but—"

"I'm not asking for myself," Steve cut in. "Dave's off his game—not much, but enough to make me nervous."

"Still crazy about that photograph of your sister?" Al asked.

Steve nodded.

"If Dave sees my sister with Fos in the gallery—well, it won't help things any," he said.

"That's simple enough," Al answered. "Call Fos off and let Ginger look after your sister."

There was something about Steve's manner that didn't ring quite true. It seemed to Al he had something up his sleeve.

"You'd be willing to make some sacrifice to see us trim Hull, wouldn't you?" he asked.

"Sure," Al answered, "but I've got to know where I stand. Girls always gum things up, and I'm no good where they are concerned. My jumping in here wouldn't help anything. If Dave's as downy over your sister as he seems, he'd resent any one cutting in—a good friend especially."

"You call yourself a good friend of Dave's?"

"Yes," answered Al.

"Well," Steve replied," you take a mighty queer way of showing it."

Steve had evidently taken Al's advice, for when Al and Hod Williams took seats in the stand on Friday afternoon, they discovered Ginger with a strange girl.

"Look at old Ginger," said Hod.

"Yeh," Al grunted. "Fos must have got the gate."

Peg Lawrence and Hull's representative were warming up for the first singles match.

"Steve's sister, I suppose," Hod remarked.

But Al didn't answer. She looked like the photograph, all right. He began to look around for Dave, and located him finally at the far end of the stand.

"When does Dave go on?" he asked.

"Second singles," said Hod. "Plays a Hull tenniser named Harris."

"Is Harris good?"

"Steve says he's soft," Hod answered.

One couldn't say the same thing for the chap Peg Lawrence drew. He knocked Peg all to pieces in straight sets. St. James sighed when it was over.

Dave and Harris came on right away. If Dave was off his game, nobody noticed it. He won the

If Dave was off his game, nobody noticed it

toss and took the balls. Three aces and a pass, and game number one was in the sack. Harris didn't have much. Now and then, he would slip over a point, but the result wasn't in doubt after the first half-dozen games. Dave never looked toward Ginger Knapp and Miss Shannon, not even when he won the match and dashed off to the showers.

Thirty minutes later he was back, and Al called to him. He came up into the stand and sat down with them.

"Nice work, Dave," Al said.

"I was lucky, Al," he answered.

"Yeh," said Hod, "Harris didn't make you work much. Say, did you see who Ginger Knapp has attached himself to? The lucky boob!"

Well, the fat was in the fire, thanks to Hod's tactlessness.

"Miss Shannon, you mean?" Dave asked.

"Yeh," said Hod.

"Steve asked Ginger to look after her for him," said Dave, just as cool as you please. "I heard them talking about it just before train time."

"Isn't that the girl Fos and Ginger were razzing you about the other night?" Hod asked.

"That's the one," said Dave. "They think I'm crazy about her. I suppose you saw that stuff

on the bulletin at Fellowship? They did that. They think they've got me going."

"Well, haven't they?" asked Al, as bold as brass.

"Hardly," Dave answered easily. "If you knew the inside dope on this, you'd laugh."

"I'm listening," Hod piped up.

Dave shook his head.

"You'll have to get it from Steve," he said. "It isn't *my* story."

"How did this stuff get started, anyway?" Hod questioned.

"The tennis team went to Melham two weeks ago, you remember," Dave explained. "I bunked with Steve, and he claimed that I talked in my sleep."

"About his sister, eh?" Al put in.

"You've got it," said Dave. "Steve must have spilled it to Fos Kelly."

"And Fos told it to Ginger," said Al.

"Steve had better let Holton take Grant on instead of Miller," said Al. "I've seen Steve work a number of times. If you ask me, I'd say Holton was Steve's master."

"It wouldn't make any difference," Dave answered. "Grant is the class of the bunch. He can beat any of us."

Holton took Miller in straight sets—a walkaway.

Sanderson went on for St. James, paired with a Hull chap named Bransfield. Neither one of them was an ace by a long shot. All the St. James "snob section" were strong for Sanderson.

After a while, Hod said, "Let's go down to Morey's and get some eats."

Al was agreeable.

"Going over to Fos Kelly's tea?" Al asked as they moved off.

"Reckon not," answered Dave.

As soon as they had their "eats," Hod wanted to go right back to the tennis match.

"What's the hurry?" Al asked.

"I don't want to miss Steve's game," Hod replied.

"You've got something up your sleeve. Come on, disgorge," said Al.

"All right," Hod answered. "This so-called Miss Shannon isn't Steve's sister. How do you like that?"

"*Not* his sister?" Al echoed.

"That's the way it looks to me."

"You haven't any reason to say that," Al asked, "have you?"

"Not a reason in the world," Hod replied. "It's a hunch, that's all."

They went over the whole thing—as far as they knew it—on the way back to the courts.

"Steve saw a chance to put something over when Dave babbled in his sleep," Hod said.

"Think Dave knows?"

"Sure, he knows," Hod insisted. "Didn't he say, 'If you knew the inside dope on this, you'd laugh?' "

Al had to admit that Dave had made such a statement.

"Well, why all this foolish deception?" Al asked. "I don't see anything so unusual in a fellow inviting his girl down to watch a tennis match."

"Maybe you'd see something in it if you knew the inside," said Hod.

"Oh, piffle!" Al retorted. "You're getting silly as the rest of 'em, with all this 'inside' stuff."

But Hod didn't pay any attention. He crowded into the aisle and upward into the stand. The audience had grown since they left. Sanderson had limped off with his match, but Hapgood was getting beaten by Marx, of Hull. Al looked down to the spot where Miss Shannon sat. She was still there, but Ginger Knapp had disappeared. A stranger sat beside her instead. And on her other side sat Steve.

"Who's the new face beside Steve's sister?" Al asked.

"That's the Hull captain, Grant," Hod answered.

"Handsome brute."

"Yeh," said Hod.

After Al watched them for a while, he made up his mind Miss Shannon was "vamping" Grant. Even a dub like Al could see that much. But he wasn't much where girls were concerned, so he didn't say anything.

Hod was right; Grant was too strong for the St. James captain. It was a pretty match; for Steve knew enough tennis to make Grant extend himself. He looked over at Miss Shannon several times. She never seemed to take her eyes off him. Steve kept hammering away and won a game now and then. The second set went to deuce five times, but Grant took it finally and the first person to congratulate him was Miss Shannon. Al didn't say anything to Hod, and Hod gave him a queer look which he didn't understand.

"I'm going over to Fos Kelly's tea," Hod announced. "Are you coming?"

"No," Al replied. "Tea fights don't interest me."

Al slept late next morning—so late that he knew he hadn't a chance for breakfast at the training table. So he went down to Morey's. There was only one breakfaster in the place; it was Fos Kelly.

"Where were you yesterday, after the match?" was the question he fired at Al.

"Oh, a few of us had some baseball practice and a swim afterward," Al answered. "Where's Ginger?"

"Search me."

"He got bumped off yesterday, I noticed," Al said.

"What do you mean, bumped off?" Fos asked.

"Well, I noticed he started out with Steve's sister, but he finished somewhere else," Al answered.

"Oh, that!" Fos replied with a knowing grin.

Al grinned back. Fos thought Al was still in the dark, and expected him to beat around the bush by asking a lot of foolish questions. But Al surprised him by saying nothing.

About a half hour later Al met Hod.

"Let's go up to Philadelphia and see a ball game," Hod suggested.

"Suits me," Al said. "I'm about fed up on this tennis stuff."

They stayed over Saturday night and saw a show. It was Sunday afternoon when they got back.

Everything was quiet. Hull had beaten St. James in the tennis doubles and won the match. That much the station agent told them.

Dick Ballard was in their room, and Dave was sprawled on the bed with a Sunday paper.

"Where have you bums been?" asked Dick.

They told him.

"Hull trimmed us," Dave announced.

"Yeh," Al answered. "We heard the inside dope went wrong."

"Well," said Dave, "I feel sort of sorry for old Steve, at that. It was well planned."

"Listen," Hod put in, "if you know the whole thing and are game to spill it, all right. If not—well, I'm off. I've heard all the hints about this mystery of Steve's sister that I care about."

"Guess there's no reason why you shouldn't know about it," said Dave. "I can't vouch for all the details, but I guess they're reasonably straight. Here's the story, just as I got it.

"Last year, when St. James's tennisers went up to Hull, Grant was just breaking in. He wasn't as good as he is now, by chalks, but he was good enough to beat Steve a shade. After the match there was a dance at Hull, and Steve noticed that Grant was an ace with girls. There was a Hull player named Drake who was just a little sore at him, and he opened up to Steve. Seems this chap had his girl down for the dance, and Grant had made a big hit with her. Of course, that didn't help Drake's disposition any. He told Steve that Grant had the reputation of being a lady-killer.

"Steve is a thoughtful cuss, with a good memory. So, when I went out for tennis this spring, and noticed that picture on his dresser, it gave him a hunch. But I guess he didn't begin to plan anything till after that night I talked in my sleep. I've never been sure I really did what Steve claimed, but let that pass. I'll admit that photograph had me going a little, but not to the extent that Fos and Ginger claimed.

"Steve explained that the photograph was a picture of his sister and, of course, I believed him. But the trouble was that Fos and Ginger had both met this girl the summer before, and she wasn't Steve's sister by a long shot. So he had to take these two birds into his confidence. They had some fun with me, as might have been expected. If I'd got dippy over this picture as Fos claimed I was, there might have been a mess. As it was, Steve began to worry about it. He thought my tennis was slipping, and figured I was downy over this girl. So the night before the match he told me the whole thing.

"He'd remembered, you see, that Grant was a ladies' man, and he had planned it with her to come down here, presumably to see the match. Introduced her as his sister and turned her loose on Grant. He figured it would throw Grant off

his game. Up to a point he figured right. She certainly had Grant jollied to a frazzle over at Fos Kelly's tea on Friday night. But what he had overlooked was his own feelings. He stood for Grant playing around just so long. Then it began to get his goat. He couldn't tell whether his girl was getting serious or only playing the game as they'd planned it. The answer was that he went to pieces in the doubles yesterday. Holton called him something fierce after the match. And I guess old Steve feels pretty tough."

"Bah!" growled Al, when Dave finished his tale. "Girls always gum things. Steve should have known better."

"You *never* know better," said Dave, "till afterward."

"Kind of a rotten situation for the girl," Hod observed.

"Did she really fall for Grant?" asked Dick.

Dave smiled knowingly. He knew something that he was holding back.

"No," he said, "I don't think she did."

Suddenly it came to Al. Dave was the one she had really "fallen for." But he didn't say anything. Girls were not his game.

THE TOREADOR

"Shorty" Atkins had tried every line of athletic sport that was popular at St. James. And it is only fair to say that he had been a failure at each and every one. For three years he had gone out religiously for football, basket ball, baseball, and track. The only reason he hadn't tried for the crew was because there was none at St. James. As a candidate Shorty was the best athlete in the school. And now, completing his fourth year, he seemed no nearer earning a varsity letter than the irresponsible song sparrow that sang in the boughs overhead.

Shorty lay on his back gazing idly up through the branches of a huge beech whose boughs were showing the first faint washes of green. Spring had come, and soon he would be through prep school with nothing to show for his four years' work. He had done well enough at his studies, but that counted for very little in his present discontent. His six feet one of gangling leanness had earned for him the name of "Shorty," but that was all.

He had come to this upland meadow—it was a favorite spot with him—in a rather bitter mood.

From this elevated spot, one could see a great distance. The wooded hills, pinky olive, the greening valleys, and the faint purple of the distant church spires of the town made a very pleasant picture. But Shorty didn't see it because he was lying on his back.

Along the road, which wound like a white ribbon through the fields, came two farmers leading a bull. The men, one with a rope around the bull's horns, and the other with one fastened to a ring in the animal's nose, were proceeding very carefully. From time to time the bull would bellow softly, and the men would exchange glances, but they moved steadily along. They were almost directly opposite Shorty when, without any warning save the deep hum of its motor, a huge touring car shot over a sharp rise in the road and bore down upon them.

There might have been one chance in a thousand for the motorist to stop his car, but he didn't take it. Instead, he opened his cut-out, tramped on the accelerator, and roared by in a cloud of dust. The farmer whose leading string was attached to the bull's nose jumped aside just in time, but in doing so was forced to release his hold. With a snort of surprise, the frightened animal plunged madly forward, jerking the remaining farmer off

his feet. For a few seconds longer the man clung to the rope. Then realizing the hopelessness of it, he let go.

The bull, frightened and angry, leaped the low wall and dashed across the field, pausing only when he was well up the slope that was crowned by the huge beech where Shorty lay contemplating his failures as an athlete. With a loud bellow and a tossing of his short, polished horns, the bull paused and looked back. He didn't care where he went so long as he was free of those meddling farmers and the white road that looked so peaceful and held such alarming terrors.

At this last bellow Shorty sat up suddenly. From the bull, some fifty yards below, he glanced quickly at the huge beech. Its lowest limb was twenty-five feet from the ground, the trunk at least three feet through. He got slowly and carefully to his feet, hoping to slip back over the hill without being seen. But he seemed out of luck. He was scarcely up when the bull saw him, and with an angry snort charged straight for him.

For an instant Shorty was paralyzed with fright. Then, with returning sanity, he plunged off toward the nearest wall. His long legs ate up the distance with amazing speed, but even so the bull was gaining.

As Shorty drew nearer the wall, he began to look for a break, or at least a low place to scramble over. But the wall presented an even surface and a uniform height. His breath began to get shorter, and he snatched a hasty look over his shoulder. The bull was gaining; there was no doubt about it. Desperately Shorty put on every ounce of energy he possessed. He must reach that wall in time! But what was he to do when he did reach it? "Jump it!" He gritted his teeth between gasps.

Nearer and nearer drew the infuriated bull. Shorty could hear his vindictive hoofs drumming on the turf. They were very near the wall now—thirty feet—twenty feet. The bull gave a loud snort of eagerness, and Shorty, for all the world like an animated jumping jack, gathered his long legs under him and left the ground. Up, and still up, he soared.

A sudden sickening fear that he might fall backward gripped him. He threw himself forward, and a little to one side, his long arms outstretched, his fingers bent like claws to clutch the wall where he fell upon it. The wall seemed to disappear, there was a spiteful snapping of briars, a clatter of stone, and Shorty was sprawled flat upon the earth. But he was over the wall! He heard a

loud scraping noise and dull bump as the bull brought up against the wall.

For a moment Shorty lay there breathing heavily, but that soon passed, and he gathered himself up and got painfully to his feet. His trousers were cut almost to ribbons and his face and hands were raw with angry scratches. But he was safe and sound, and a great sigh of relief escaped him. He would have to duck through the alleys to get to his room, but that was a small affair.

"Guess I'll have a look at that bull," he muttered, and picked his way through the briars to the wall.

But when he reached the wall and placed his hands upon it, all thought of the bull suddenly left his mind. A queer look overspread his normally solemn face. This gave place to a broad grin, and, without even glancing at the belligerent bull, he left the wall and started for his room.

A thought had taken possession of him, and it made him extremely happy. So absorbed in it did he become that he forgot all about his torn clothes and scratched face.

As he neared the dormitory, Ham Kingdom called out, "Oh, look at Shorty! He's been quarrelling with the kittens! Naughty, naughty!"

Shorty grinned sheepishly.

"It wasn't a cat, it was a bull," he said.

"Look at his pants!" said Macklin, the quarter-miler. "He's got cooties and they're eating their way out!"

"Of course. There's nothing to eat inside."

"It was a bull," Shorty repeated.

"We heard you the first time."

"Say, Shorty—" but Shorty bolted to his room without further argument. He had lost his pants, but what did he care! He had found an inspiration, and he knew it was worth more than all the pants he owned.

Shorty hadn't been over on the track for three days, and when he sauntered in late that afternoon no one paid any particular attention to him. He found trainer Casey and cautiously questioned him about Dorsen and Coolidge, the high-jumpers.

"They had their work-out an hour ago, Atkins," said Casey. "Was you thinkin' of tryin' a few jumps?"

"Well, yes," said Shorty, with a careless air. "That is, if I shan't be in your way."

"Not at all, not at all. Go as fur as ye like," returned the genial Casey.

Fifteen minutes later Shorty in track togs trotted out of the gym. The baseball squad was at work at the far end of the field, and he looked at them fearfully. He hoped they wouldn't notice him.

He placed the bar at five feet. Casey stared. In an awkward, shuffling run, Shorty approached the take-off. Within a few paces of it his stride quickened suddenly. Then he folded up his long legs and soared over the bar, with inches to spare.

"Put her up three inches, Mr. Casey," he ordered, and stalked grandly up the runway.

Again he ambled toward the take-off and cleared the bar in a sprawling jump.

"Three inches more," he said briefly.

He cleared that, too, and Casey, his eyes like onions, followed him to the gym.

Shorty told him the whole thing, watching Casey's expressive face while he talked. Then he added, "This is strictly between us, Mr. Casey," and held out his hand, which Casey shook willingly.

When Casey drew his hand away, he found a crisp bank note in it. This he promptly handed back to Shorty.

"I'll keep your secret without the money, if ye please, Mr. Atkins," he said proudly.

"Of course, Casey. I know that. This is a secret between gentlemen. But how about the kiddies? A little treat for them, eh?" said Shorty cunningly.

Casey grinned, and his horny palm closed on the note.

"Thank ye for a kind-hearted gentleman, Mr. Atkins," he said. "An' yer secret's safe wid me. Don't worry."

"What's on between Casey and Shorty Atkins?" asked Fos Kelly one afternoon three weeks later.

Al Macklin, the track captain, plucked a blade of grass and stuck it in his mouth.

"Why?" he asked.

"I've seen them three times within a week coming from the gym just at dusk," said Fos mysteriously.

"Well, what of it?"

"Doesn't that strike you as rather queer?"

"H'm," Macklin grunted. "Why don't you ask Shorty?"

"I have," said Fos. "He just smiled and wouldn't say anything."

"Probably figured it was none of your business," said Al. "I like a guy that can keep his affairs to himself."

"Yeh, I've noticed that," said Fos ruefully. "You know," he went on after a pause, "I feel sort of sorry for Shorty."

"He'd be glad if he knew it, of course," answered Macklin tersely.

Fos continued without paying any attention to Macklin's remark.

"He's been trying for a varsity letter ever since he's been here, and it seems pretty tough. This is his last year, too."

"Yeh, kinda tough," said Al.

He said no more, and apparently he was not enough impressed with Fos's allusion to remember it. But that was only on the surface. Macklin was deep and crafty, and behind his bluffness was a mind that worked quickly and far. He was track captain for other reasons besides his strong and active muscles. He knew, far better than any member of the team, what a distance lay between them and victory over Hull School in June. Hull had a team that might stretch St. James till they cracked. So he made a careful note of Fos Kelly's chatter, and began to watch Shorty Atkins.

May was far advanced, and still Shorty and Casey had kept their secret. But they no longer foregathered at the track in the summer twilight. At a farm, a mile away, Shorty arranged for his practice jumps, and each afternoon he jogged out, did his work-out, and jogged back in time for dinner. The only errand that brought him to the gym was his daily shower. Macklin had studied him many times when Shorty little dreamed he was being watched. But he found nothing to warrant continuing his scrutiny, and gave it up at

last. Fos had been merely vaporing. Then one evening just at dusk he saw Casey and Shorty meet on the street.

As Macklin ducked behind a tree, he heard Casey say, "Well, Mr. Atkins, how goes it?"

"Five-nine last night," said Shorty promptly.

They walked off together, Macklin following at a little distance. At the second corner they separated. Shorty went to Baldwin's Billiard Hall, and Macklin trailed Casey to his home. For a long time he prowled about across the street from Casey's, but after a while the lights were extinguished and the Casey household went to sleep.

Macklin walked to his room in a thoughtful mood. For an hour he lay awake in his room, turning the thing over in his mind, but he had nothing tangible to build on. "Five-nine" might mean one of several things.

A crowd went by singing "close harmony." One of them called, "Oh, you Al!" at his open window. "Come on down to Morey's and get some waffles." The voice was Shorty Atkins'.

Macklin leaped from his bed and hurried to the window. "Be with you in a minute," he said, and hurried into his clothes. He had made a sudden resolution and was determined to act upon it.

With Shorty were Fos Kelly, Knapp, pitcher for the nine, and a junior named Burkett. They wandered toward Morey's coffeehouse, chatting and singing snatches of song.

"You guys woke me out of a pleasant dream," said Al, falling in step beside Shorty. "I was dreaming that we licked the Hull track team to a frazzle," he went on.

"Which *was* a dream," said Fos. "They're too strong for us this year."

"Listen to the cheerful tidings," said Knapp.

"What's the matter with you, Fos?" asked Al.

"Not a thing. But I'm convinced we can't stop Hull."

"Piffle!" said Burkett.

"What does Coach Boles say?" asked Shorty.

"Same as Fos here," said Knapp. "He and Boles are always throwing the pessimist chatter."

"Where's the trouble?" asked Burkett.

"No high-jumpers," answered Macklin.

The talk was getting "down to cases" and there was a moment's silence.

"Dorsen does five-seven once every fifty jumps. Coolidge has never done better than five-six. Hull has three men who do five-eight. We'll be lucky to get a place," Macklin went on watching Shorty narrowly.

But Shorty seemed wholly unconscious of the captain's scrutiny.

"Simple enough," said Knapp. "All you've got to catch is a legger that can do six feet, and the thing's done."

"Yeh," said Al with a shrug. "That's *all*. If I had a man that could do five-nine, I'd be tickled pink."

Again he watched Shorty for some betraying sign, and again he was disappointed.

"I nominate Shorty Atkins for the position," said Fos suddenly. "He's tried everything else!"

"Sure, go to it, Shorty, old boy," said Ginger Knapp, clapping him on the back.

Shorty grinned sheepishly. It hurt a little to be laughed at, but the knowledge of success in his final athletic venture kept him cool.

Fos and Knapp left Shorty and Macklin at Morey's, both saying they had no appetite for the famous waffles.

No sooner had the two former left their companions than they broke into a shuffling run for their room. Fos secured a large placard and, after carefully composing an announcement, Ginger printed it on the placard. Together they stole out and placed it on the chapel bulletin board. There was some subdued laughter and whispering in their

room after their return. Then they went to bed and to sleep with no evidence of any uneasiness of conscience.

Next morning after chapel a noisy group surrounded the bulletin. Shorty read it as he passed in, but immediately after chapel he hurried away for a recitation. By the time Macklin read it, half the school were laughing. If he felt like laughing, he kept the desire well hidden, and read through the entire affair with a sober face.

ANNOUNCEMENT EXTRAORDINARY!

Mr. Shorty Atkins wishes to announce that he is henceforth from this minute a candidate for the track team as a high-jumper. If he can't jump the barrier he can step over it, so there you are! How can he lose?

Macklin, after reading this, tramped off to find Shorty. He met him on the street finally, and greeted him with a friendly nod.

"Come up to my room a minute. I want to talk to you," he said.

Shorty followed without a word.

"You saw the announcement at chapel, I suppose?" Macklin asked.

Shorty nodded.

"Somebody has a rotten poor sense of humor, and I want you to understand that I hold that kind

of fun as muckerish," Macklin announced soberly. "And I'm sorry it happened," he added.

Shorty nodded again. Mack looked at him curiously. Shorty seemed very grave, and his continued silence was becoming a little awkward.

"By gad!" he exclaimed suddenly, striking the chair arm with his fist. "I've got it! Let's find Coach Boles!"

It was Macklin who did the following now, entirely mystified by Shorty's peculiar actions. They found Coach Boles, and without any preliminaries Shorty plunged in and told the whole story, from the race with the bull to the establishment of a training place on a near-by farm.

"And you've done five-nine?" asked the coach after the first surprise.

"Yes, sir. I do it regularly," said Shorty.

The coach's eyes sparkled. Macklin simply beamed.

"This 'announcement' just fits in right. No one will suspect it's anything but a joke. And when my name appears in the official entry list, the story will be that much funnier. I'd expected to tell you—" looking at the coach—"in plenty of time, but I should have liked to have kept Al in the dark a little longer," said Shorty.

"Not a word of this to anyone," said the coach.

"Bad news travels fast, and this is surely bad news for Hull. Come over to the track this afternoon, Shorty, and make a bluff at practicing your jumps. The fake news must be kept alive. Hull will hear of it, of course, and it's up to us to see that they hear just what we want them to hear."

The day dawned at last, a glorious June day—blue sky, warm sun, and just the suspicion of a breeze.

The St. James team, all but Fos, had finished breakfast. Macklin had gone off early with the coach, and Shorty had mysteriously disappeared.

Fos buttered a slice of toast and looked across at Ginger Knapp, who sat in a window seat looking over the morning paper.

"Any dope?" he asked.

"No. The sports editor predicts Hull will win, but of course that isn't news," said Ginger.

"Nothing about Shorty, is there?" Fos asked.

"Not a word. You know, Kelly, that chap puzzles me."

"How so?"

"Well, how many fellows do you know that would have gone to the track after that 'announcement' at chapel the way he did?"

"H'm, not many, that's a fact," Fos admitted, grinning at the memory of it.

"He made a holy show of himself. And what for? He's no fool. There's something behind this, mark my word," said Ginger.

"I'm half sorry we pulled that joke on him, but he *was* funny," Fos observed.

Immediately after luncheon Coach Boles gave the team their final instructions.

"Hull may whip us today, but she will have to stretch herself to do it. On the other hand, we shall have to give our last ounce of strength to win. But remember, above everything else, this one thing: Use your heads! All ready? Let's go."

They trooped out of the training quarters and started for the gym. The streets were filled with people in holiday attire. Color vendors were hawking the pennants of Hull and St. James. There were girls with gay parasols and boys with loud hatbands.

Heretofore Shorty had always been one of this well-dressed throng of enthusiasts. At last he was with "the team"—where he had always longed to be. It gave him a queer sensation that was not exactly comfortable. This sensation increased when he reached the gym. He spoke to Fos about it.

"Nerves, kid," said Fos, with the air of a veteran

talking to a novice. "You'll be all there after a jump or two. Don't worry."

Shorty slipped on his bathrobe and strolled out on the field. For a fleeting second he felt like bolting. How much nicer it would be to be dressed in cool palm-beach clothes, sitting up there in the stand like a gentleman! He felt stuffy and hot in the heavy bathrobe, and his feet hurt in his spiked shoes.

A group of field men—hammer, shot, discus, and javelin throwers—went by. They wore the dark blue of Hull, and were a husky-looking lot. They grinned, and one big fellow waved his hand at Shorty. He waved back to them. This incident made him feel better somehow. They seemed very cool and easy, and Shorty felt ashamed of his funk.

The stands were filling up, and cheer leaders were beginning to warm up the crowds. A band blared forth in a lively tune, and some sprinters at the back stretch jogged along in time with it. Then came the booming cheers of the rival schools, and in the midst of this the brass notes of a bugle call announced the first events.

The sprints came first, and Captain Macklin took first in the 100 yards. Hull took second and third, but St. James snatched fourth place less

than a yard from the tape. The best she could do in the 120-yard hurdle was third and fourth, while Hull gathered eight points with a first and second. The 220 hurdles also went to Hull by one point. Captain Macklin took an easy first, but second, third, and fourth were lost. Barron of St. James and Crawford of Hull ran a dead heat in the 220-yard dash. Crawford won the toss, and St. James had to be content with three points. Score: Hull, 19; St. James, 14.

The shot-putters toiled in the heat with but little change in the score, Hull taking a first, but losing every other place.

St. James took first in the pole vault, but lost second and third, so the score was relatively about where it was at the end of the sprints.

Ginger Knapp sent St. James's stock up by winning the javelin throw, just nosing out McIntosh, his team mate. Hull took third, and Jones, of St. James, fourth.

Hull's captain took the broad jump, as everyone expected he would. A Hull athlete also took fourth. But St. James came through unexpectedly with a second and third, and their supporters responded with an avalanche of noise.

Up to this time St. James had cheered with a sort of sullen defiance as if they had expected

defeat. But now, the events over half completed, and St. James two points to the good, a wild hope began to possess them that St. James had a-better-than-even-chance to win.

Hull's rooters replied bravely, their cheers rising to a roar when Boland, the St. James hammer thrower, got only a third. Carrick, his team mate, took fourth, but Hull exulted over the overthrow of the great Boland.

Knowing his event to be scheduled next, Shorty slipped off his bathrobe and began jogging up and down beside the high-jump take-off. His nervousness had passed to a great extent, and he felt Fos was right—he would feel quite fit after he was warmed up a bit. Casey came across the field with Coach Boles, talking and gesticulating earnestly.

"Shorty," said Boles as they reached him, "the Hull high-jump star missed his train. I didn't know it till just now. He is coming down by motor, and Coach Pratt of Hull is expecting him every minute. What do you want to do? Wait, or insist on running off the event as scheduled? That's your privilege, you know. It was up to *him* to get here."

"Gosh, Coach, I don't know what to say! I'm pretty green at this sort of thing, you know," said Shorty truthfully.

Casey started to say something, but Boles cut him off.

"It will be just as you say," said Boles in a cool voice, while his keen eyes bored into Shorty's mercilessly.

"I'd like to win, Coach," he said, "but I guess we'll wait. I've waited four years for this, and an hour longer won't make any difference."

"Right," said Boles. "Better put your bathrobe on."

So Shorty, once more wrapped in his bathrobe, sat and watched his team mates perform. When he said he was "pretty green at this sort of thing," he had told the whole truth. It never entered his head that Coach Pratt had planned this delay purposely; that if he, Shorty, had refused to wait, the Hull high-jumper would suddenly and quickly have appeared. Casey had discovered the plan, reported to Coach Boles, and Boles had come immediately and put the proposition before him. Shorty thought that the sharp eyes of the coach had been watching for the "yellow," and he was confident he had done the right thing. Casey was going to spill the whole business, and Boles had stopped him. But, of course, Shorty couldn't guess that.

"This would mean Pratt's job if I chose to expose him," said Boles after they had left Shorty.

"An' serve him good an' right. He's unfit to teach clean sportsmen, the dirty crook!" said Casey bitterly.

McIntosh took the discus, and Knapp crowded into second, leaving third and fourth for Hull. St. James broke into another wild spasm of cheering at this. They felt reasonably certain of an even break in the distance events, and the long end of a 50-48 score seemed an assured thing.

Some one began suddenly—in the Hull section—to call for the high jump. In a moment both stands were buzzing with queries. Dorsen and Coolidge, St. James's "regular" high-jumpers, came across the field in their bathrobes. They sat down beside Shorty.

"What's the Hull coach trying to pull off?" asked Coolidge.

"Haven't an idea," said Shorty. "All I know is what Coach Boles told me. I suppose he has explained to you?"

"About Fisher missing the train?" asked Dorsen. "All rot. Mr. High-Jump Fisher of Hull School is within five minutes' walk of this field. You and Coolidge are soft. Why didn't you hold out for immediate action as I did?"

"I didn't know—" said Shorty.

"Of course not," Dorsen cut in crossly.

"Forget it!" said Coolidge. "We'll jump this Fisher person out of his pants."

Over across the field the quarter-milers were lining up at the tape.

"If Fos Kelly doesn't take this race, I'm off him for life," Dorsen threatened.

But Fos did take it, and dragged his team mate, Bancroft, into third place.

"Ban might have had second place if he'd moved up a bit," Coolidge observed.

"We're five points to the good, anyway," said Shorty consolingly.

Dorsen grunted. He still felt a trifle on edge over the postponement of the high jump.

"Captain Macklin ought to take the half easy," said Coolidge.

"Yeh, but what have we left for the mile and the relay?" Dorsen demanded.

"Search me," said Shorty.

"Well, I'll tell you. We'll get nothing out of the relay, and a possible third in the mile," Dorsen explained, and lapsed into a moody silence.

Coolidge was right. Captain Macklin took the half. Boland, who had lost the hammer throw, surprised everyone by taking second. Hull's entry won third place, and Barron, of St. James, took fourth.

Hull was conceded the mile, and took it handily. But they took second and third also, and St. James sat stupefied for a moment. Hull went wild with happiness at this sudden turn of events. St. James was still three points to the good, but Fisher would surely take the high jump, and the relay would be a certainty. Hull had good reason to cheer. She had expected a fairly easy victory to begin with. St. James's unlooked-for strength had come as a shock. But now a victory seemed certain, and the long pent-up enthusiasm broke loose in a bedlam of noise.

The entries were lining up for the relay when Shorty slipped quietly down off the stand, shed his bathrobe, and began jogging up and down, flexing his long legs in a preliminary warm-up. Nobody took the slightest notice, for which he was grateful. He had schooled himself to ignore the taunts and gibes that he knew would be his portion when he began to jump. But he was not quite prepared for the Hull rooters who made the field echo and reëcho with shouts for "Fisher!" Flushed with their latest victory—the relay—and confident in their champion, they were eager to see him dispose of this "long-legged crane with the undertaker's face."

Shorty's own schoolmates had never taken his

athletics seriously. They knew how faithfully he had trained, and it was generally understood that Captain Macklin had carried him at the training table as a mark of recognition. But that he could actually jump struck them as funny.

A buzz of talk went through the St. James stand, while a track clerk smoothed the loam in the landing pit, and two others placed the bar at five feet. Coolidge, Dorsen, and Shorty went over it easily. So did Morrison and Jones, of Hull. But Fisher paid no attention to the bar, and jogged up and down, with an aggravating smile.

"Swell-headed pup!" said Dorsen in an undertone that was a little louder than it should have been. But, if Fisher heard it, he gave no sign.

The bar was placed at five-three. After all the other candidates went over, Fisher cleared it without once losing his contemptuous smile. Slowly the bar traveled upward. At five-seven, Jones was left by the wayside. At five-eight Morrison and Coolidge were through. Shorty went over it with inches to spare, and for the first time Fisher looked at him seriously. Dorsen got away with five-eight and a half; but it took an extra trial for Fisher to make it. Shorty shuffled awkwardly toward the take-off and cleared the bar in his usual sprawling jump. The St. James cohorts suddenly

awoke to the fact that he was no longer a joke athlete. The bar was placed at five-nine.

"He'll crack this time," said a voice from the Hull crowd.

"No more form than a sick goat," said another, as Shorty soared over the bar.

In the roar that followed, a voice answered, "He's got Hull's goat, form or no form!"

Dorsen failed after three trials at five-nine, but Fisher made it. Up went the bar another half inch. Fisher failed on two attempts, but got over on his third. Shorty did it the first time up. With the bar at five-ten, he walked down the runway. As he started his queer rambling approach he suddenly thought of the day the bull had started him on that mad race that had ended in his unheard-of jump. His long legs stretched automatically, and in two strides he was running at top speed. He reached the take-off. Up he soared toward the bar. His body seemed to fold in the middle like a jackknife. Then a twisting motion, and in another heartbeat he lay on the soft loam of the landing pit.

St. James broke into cheers. Hull answered sullenly. What was the matter with Fisher, anyway? Was he going to let this tall, awkward chap from St. James beat him? Impossible! Fisher

had never been beaten in the high jump, and he wouldn't be beaten now.

His first try at five-ten failed. His smile was gone now and he looked a little white, but he seemed cool enough. On the second try, he got over, just nipping the bar. For a second it seemed to hang in mid-air. Then one end slid off, and the bar dropped to the ground. A groan went up from the Hull crowd. St. James was becoming more confident every minute in its gawky champion. But Fisher's third try was successful.

Again the bar was moved, to five-ten and a half. Shorty failed ignominiously in his first try, and Hull began to take heart, only to lose it again as his second attempt was successful. Fisher was distinctly nervous, and his first try fell short. His second was shy only a fraction, but it knocked down the bar. He took his allotted rest, a rubber kneading his leg muscles.

Coolidge suddenly appeared at Shorty's side with a bathrobe.

"Slip this on," he ordered, and Shorty obeyed mechanically.

"How do you feel?" he asked.

"Oh, all right," said Shorty.

During this interval the crowd kept up an incessant rattle of cheers.

"This Fisher bird is through," said Coolidge, cupping his hand around Shorty's ear. "Keep your nerve."

Fisher arose, jogged to the take-off, and jogged back. Then in a sudden stillness, broken only by the spiteful crunch of his spiked shoes in the cindered runway, he came toward the take-off in a tearing run. His jump was perfect in form, but inches short. The bar and Fisher landed in the pit almost together. In the tumult that followed, he picked himself up and forced his way through the wild throng of St. James boys who were putting Shorty on their shoulders.

"Did we win?" Shorty asked stupidly, striving to make himself heard above the din.

He was forced to make a speech that night in the flaring light of the bonfire on the campus. No one seemed to be much interested in his serious talk about "school spirit" and "sportsmanship." The bull story had got out—thanks to Trainer Casey—and when Shorty had finished speaking Captain Macklin called out, "What's the matter with 'Bull Atkins'?" and in an answering roar came "He's all right!"

"Three times three for the Toreador!" ordered Fos Kelly.

And the crowd responded with a rattling cheer.

That's why—whenever any one speaks of a high-jumper at St. James—nobody hears "Shorty" mentioned. It's either "Bull" or the "Toreador." He had been rechristened on that memorable afternoon when the great Hull track team had been defeated 75 to 72.

A QUESTION OF COLOR

It was an unwritten law at St. James that the team captains were the best—from all angles—in the sport they played. But electing this boy or that didn't necessarily assure him of the position.

More than once a captain had been displaced because he didn't show the requisite qualifications. Occasionally the wrong boy would be elected captain and stick the season through because there wasn't any good reason to remove him. And such was Captain Cook. He was a fine baseball player. Even his enemies had to admit that. He was a leader, too, and the team always played their best for him.

The spring he was captain there were three battery candidates—two outfielders and a shortstop. Of course, there were three times that number who came out, but within a week the field had narrowed down to the number just mentioned. Things would have solved themselves eventually, but it happened that the shortstop candidate was Joe Hammond, and he was the best kid shortstop Coach Boles ever saw. If he had tried for almost any other job, he might have succeeded. But Daniels was the regular in that

position, and he happened to be Cook's best friend. Daniels was a good shortstop; but Hammond was so much better that even a girl could have seen the difference, though maybe that's making it a bit too strong.

Now ordinarily this wouldn't have been a very unusual situation. Team captains often are forced to surrender places to outsiders—places they had hoped to fill with their friends. But what gave this a queer angle was the fact that Joe Hammond was a colored boy. There wasn't a thing to bar him from entering St. James if he could make the study conditions, and was clean morally. He had matriculated the September before, not without a growl of protest from some of the boys. But he had been so self-effacing and retiring that he was promptly forgotten.

Captain Cook did everything he could to help Daniels. He and Bill Daniels were friends, and Cap had a right to give Bill every legitimate chance. But one night Cook went to Peg Wilson and hinted about making bad throws to Hammond, and not backing up his plays, and all that. Peg resented it.

"No!" he said, good and loud.

Of course, that didn't help matters. Cook looked at him as if he were wondering just how

far he could go. Then he said, "You're a queer bird. I should think you would prefer old Bill Daniels working beside you to this 'smoke.' "

"I would," Peg answered promptly. "Bill's a prince of a chap and a good ball player."

"What's the matter with you, then?" he asked.

"Nothing unusual," Peg said. "I can't do what you hinted at, that's all. And I don't think you're using Bill square, trying to frame something to make a place for him. If I know Bill, he'll resent that. He wants to win on his merit, not on scheming."

Peg had touched a raw spot there, but he didn't know it. As he soon discovered, Captain Cook was one of these fellows who is jealous of his friends.

"Is that *so?*" he sneered. "You don't know a thing about Bill Daniels, that's a cinch."

He stalked off with his head in the air.

The next day Daniels went to short, and Hammond moved over to third—Peg's job. Peg had expected just such a move, but it hurt. It was his third year in that position, and he had begun to feel that it belonged to him. Perhaps he was a little overconfident, and probably the change did him good. He made a resolution to himself that he'd "show them something" when

he got back to third. But that didn't help him much just then. From what Joe Hammond had done at short, it wasn't very consoling. He might beat Peg out of *his* place.

Just then Captain Cook went by on his way to left field.

"It feels different when the boot is on your own leg, eh?" he asked, and laughed a sneering laugh.

"There's always a place in the outfield," Peg laughed back. "When I get too slow for third, I'm going to try for left field."

"Swell chance you'd have," was the answer. "You've got to hit to hold a job out here."

"If that's the case, you're about through," Peg said. "You didn't hit the size of your collar in the opening game."

Hammond laughed, and Captain Cook heard him. He turned and came back.

"What are *you* laughing at?" he demanded of Joe.

"Do you think he's going to wear crêpe on his sleeve every time your feelings are hurt?" Peg cut in.

"No need," said Cap. "He's black enough without it."

"Bein' black doesn't worry me much," said Joe, grinning.

"No, I guess not," said Cap, "but it worries Wilson here a whole lot."

"If he beats me to it," Peg remarked, getting hot, "you won't hear me whining alibis all over the place."

Just what would have followed is hard to guess, for Cap and Peg were growing angrier every minute.

"Cut that conversation down there at third, and let's play ball!" Coach Boles ordered.

They scattered immediately. The boys usually did what the coach asked the first time. Peg remained near third for quite a while coaching Hammond. He was a little shy on ground balls to his right. And he was slow on bunts. But he didn't have any faults (that Peg could see) that couldn't be corrected. So Peg wasn't in a very happy frame of mind when Coach Boles switched Hammond over to short, and put him on third. Bill Daniels stopped a minute on his way to the showers.

"How does he look over here?" he asked, indicating Joe with a nod.

"Oh, all right, I guess," Peg answered indifferently."

"You take it coolly enough," said Bill. "Wish I could."

"I'm not worrying over it," Peg said, and he meant it.

He had some plans of his own, and he would try them before he quit.

In the shower room, Coach Boles stopped him.

"What were you hanging around third for when Hammond was playing the base?" he asked.

"I was showing him a few things, Coach," Peg answered. "It's a hard corner for a newcomer."

"Oh, indeed! So you were coaching him a bit?" Coach Boles asked with a grin.

Peg nodded. There was something about the coach's manner that made him feel shamefaced.

"Now listen, Peg," he said in a quiet tone that Peg knew meant business. "You keep off that coaching stuff. If the candidates need any instruction, they get it from me."

"I wasn't really interested in showing Hammond anything. But Captain Cook tried to rub it in that I was losing my job. I wouldn't let him see I was worried. So I tried to cover by coaching Hammond," Peg explained.

"Well," said Coach Boles, "take my advice and drop the coaching. It won't make you any friends."

Peg could see the coach was right. "No fellow your own age likes to be told how to do a thing.

He *figures* he knows as much about it as you, even when he doesn't," he said to himself.

"Do you think Hammond will make good at third?" Peg asked.

Foolish question! The coach only grinned and walked away.

For the next few days the situation didn't change much. When Hammond wasn't working at short, he took Peg's corner, and Peg had plenty of time to think it over. Joe still had a tendency to shirk those fast nasty bounders just inside the bag, and he wasn't getting much better on bunts. But, Oh boy! how he could hit! His batting got better every day. He was just one of those natural hitters that can catch the ball on the thick of the wood. Coach Boles's eyes would snap whenever Hammond took his turn with the stick.

Peg was a better hitter than Cook by a shade, and better than Daniels by a whole lot. So he decided that next day he'd ask Coach Boles for a chance in the outfield. He felt sure that the coach would give him a trial there, and if he didn't make good he'd be no worse off than before. It would do Cook good to have a good scare thrown into him, Peg thought. It might help Daniels out a bit, too. Bill was a good fellow, and Peg felt sorry for him. But he changed his mind that same night.

Peg was sitting in a movie theater with Al Macklin, when some boys came in just behind them. They paid no attention until a voice Peg knew was Daniels' said, "If you can't do anything, I'll quit."

"But what can I do about it, Bill?" asked Captain Cook.

"Well, if I were the captain, I'd have *some*thing to say," answered Bill.

"You're borrowing trouble," said Cap easily. "Coach Boles plans to use Hammond at third, and Peg Wilson as subinfielder."

"With Peg hitting a hundred points better than me? You talk foolish," said Bill.

For a minute they were quiet. Peg stole a look at Al. He hadn't heard a word apparently. Peg didn't know what to do. He hated an eavesdropper. But he couldn't get out without explaining to Al, and he didn't know but that Al had heard in spite of his looking so innocent.

"Well," said Cook, "I'm sorry, Bill."

"Oh, sure, you're sorry!" Bill answered. "Only you're not sorry enough to do anything that gets us anywhere."

"I can't do it alone," said Cap. "I told you I asked the whole infield to help, and they all turned me down."

"Yes, and the fellow that might have helped us most you got sore at," said Bill.

"Who do you mean?" asked Cap.

"Why, Peg Wilson, of course," said Bill. "What did you stick Hammond on third for? You knew he hadn't a chance there. All the good you did was to get Peg sore at you. You've made a mess of the whole thing!"

"I had nothing to do with Hammond going to third," said Cook. "That was Coach Boles's idea, not mine."

Bill only grunted. They were quiet after this, and shortly after, Al and Peg went out. Peg couldn't believe Bill Daniels to be a whiner. And he was the chap Peg was planning to help by making a try for the outfield! Well, you never know a fellow until you stand in the way of something he wants!

Saturday afternoon came, and with it came the Franklin team. This was a pretty fair team, and the St. James boys had to exert themselves to win. Hammond started at shortstop, and he stayed there seven innings because he couldn't get going right somehow. And St. James required that long a time to take a commanding lead. Then Bill Daniels went in, and had three of the hardest chances imaginable right in a row. The ball just wouldn't bounce right, and he booted all three of

them. The crowd began to josh him good-naturedly, and some leather-throated rooter wanted to know why the "smoke" had been taken out. It's easy to understand just how poor Bill must have felt.

After the third fumble, he turned to Peg and said, "I guess I'm through for today. This thing's got my goat, Peg."

"What's a few errors? Everybody makes 'em," Peg said. "Get hold of yourself."

But he didn't. He struck out his only time at bat, and altogether he had a miserable day.

Most of the team were chattering and laughing in the showers as usual. It's a pretty pleasant sensation to win, and everybody was feeling—and looking—happy, except Bill Daniels and Captain Cook.

Bill was worried, and with good reason. He knew that. Hammond had made him look like a second-stringer. And Captain Cook was worried because he couldn't see any way to get rid of Hammond. Peg didn't feel nearly as sorry for Bill since he'd heard him complaining that night in the movie theater.

The next week's practice didn't make any visible change. Hammond and Bill kept alternating at short, and Peg wasn't bothered at third. On

Wednesday afternoon Coach Boles did a peculiar thing. He put Hammond at short on the second team for a five-inning practice game. Of course, everyone had his own ideas as to why this was done. Some thought the coach wanted to try Hammond on a losing team to see how his nerve was. Others wondered whether he had meant to encourage Bill. And the rest hadn't any idea why it was done. But nothing developed. Hammond was just as good on the second team as he was with the first. After the game he boasted a bit about his playing, and the coach heard it.

"Never mind the bouquets, Hammond," he said. "You're a good ball player, but you'll be a better one as soon as you learn that a boaster and a bonehead are first cousins."

The St. James boys left Friday afternoon for Wellsville, principally because there wasn't a morning train that would get them there in time for the game. Wellsville was a new name on the schedule, and they knew very little about it. As it was past midnight when they arrived, they went directly to the hotel. The clerk looked at Hammond rather strangely, but said nothing. No one thought of it until next morning, when the team was crossing the lobby toward the breakfast room, Coach Boles and Peg in the lead.

A short, fat man suddenly stopped them. "You the manager?" he asked the coach.

"No, but I'll answer for him. What's the trouble?"

"The colored member of your team is the trouble, sir," said the fat man.

"I'm afraid I don't quite make you," said Coach Boles.

"I must explain, sir, that I am forbidden to keep him from the hotel by law, but there is no law about how much his bill might be."

There was a pause. Everybody was looking at Hammond and Captain Cook and the Coach. No one was thinking about the money Hammond might cost the team. In a flash Peg saw what a chance there was for Cook to get rid of Hammond. And that meant Bill Daniels at short, and everything serene. He kept saying to himself, "He'll do it! Here it comes!" But it didn't. Cap was a faster thinker than Peg gave him credit for.

"Come on, Joe," he said. "We'll eat somewhere else."

"That suits me, Cap," said Joe, and they started for the door.

Coach Boles turned to the fat man.

"Why didn't your clerk tell us last night when we came in?" he asked.

"Possibly didn't know enough," answered the fat man.

"This is a fine democratic spirit you show," the coach said coldly.

"I'm a hotel keeper, sir, not a demonstrator of democracy," he snapped.

"You're something else, too. If you can't figure it out, you might get that smart night clerk of yours to help," Coach Boles drawled.

Immediately after breakfast the boys paid the bill and left. Wellsville wasn't a large town, and of course the news soon spread all over the place. They found another hotel, a much poorer one. But they used it only to store their baggage in, so it didn't need to be so good. They spent the morning strolling around the town, visited the public library, and took a swim in the new municipal swimming pool. It was about eleven o'clock when they started for the hotel, and Peg found himself walking beside Bill Daniels.

"That was square of Captain Cook to stick up for Hammond the way he did," said Bill. "But I didn't think he'd do it."

"No?" Peg asked. "Why not?"

"Well, there was a swell chance for Cap to get rid of Hammond by telling him to beat it, and avoid trouble," answered Bill.

That was the very thing that had flashed into Peg's mind when the fat hotel manager stopped the team that morning! But he didn't say so to Bill.

"And there was still another chance after Cap and Hammond had left the hotel," Bill went on.

"I don't get you," said Peg, puzzled.

"Wouldn't it have been simple for Cap to send a wire to himself calling him home?" he asked.

"Sure," Peg said, "simple enough. Also foolish. You've got some funny ideas about the duties of a team captain."

"There are other duties," he answered. "Friendship and unselfishness, for instance. It wouldn't hurt Cap to lay out one game. Hammond could take third, and you could go in at Cap's place in left."

Peg laughed.

"And all this mix-up because you aren't fast enough to hold the job at shortstop!" he said. "Speaking of unselfishness, how about yourself? Do you think people are always going to fix it up soft for you?"

"You're wrong in one place," Bill replied. "I am not the only one to blame. If Hammond had stayed off the team, there wouldn't have been any mix-up."

Peg had to admit there was something in this, and they walked along in silence. They were the last to reach the hotel, and had no more than got there when a tall, well-built chap came up to the coach.

"Mr. Boles?" he asked.

Coach Boles turned.

"My name is Wallace," said the tall chap. "I'm the coach at Wellsville."

They shook hands.

"About an hour ago, we got the news of the unfortunate incident at Park Hotel. The faculty held a hurried meeting and reached a decision. I'm afraid, Mr. Boles, that I'm bringing you bad news," said Mr. Wallace.

"How so?" asked the St. James coach.

"The faculty, in behalf of the team, protest your playing a colored boy against Wellsville," Mr. Wallace answered.

"That matter should have been gone into, and settled, before we took a five-hour train ride," said Coach Boles.

"I admit it," said the Wellsville coach, "but our faculty had no idea you permitted colored boys on your teams. I regret the whole business, but their stand is irrevocable. Isn't there some way we can adjust this?"

"By playing a substitute, you mean?" asked the coach.

Mr. Wallace started to answer, but Coach Boles fired another question:

"Is that your faculty's idea of sportsmanship to ask a visiting team to weaken themselves to accommodate the home crowd's ethics?"

"Well," said Mr. Wallace, "as far as that goes, Wellsville considers it bad ethics to play colored boys. It's a matter upon which there can be more than one opinion. Don't decide this too hurriedly, Mr. Boles."

During this talk the team stood around with keen attention. Nobody knew what was coming next, and the last thing they expected happened.

"Mr. Boles, I'm willing to stay out, if that suits you and Captain Cook," said Joe Hammond.

"It doesn't suit me at all," Coach Boles answered.

"Nor me," snapped Cook. "Hammond stays, or I resign as captain."

"Well?" asked Coach Boles, turning to Mr. Wallace.

"Is that the last word?" he asked in turn.

"I'm afraid it is," answered Coach Boles.

"I'm sorry," said Mr. Wallace.

Then he bowed and walked away. The boys gave three cheers for themselves, and went to lunch.

Bill Daniels finished the season at shortstop. Five of them, Coach Boles, Captain Cook, Joe, Bill, and Peg, got together and talked it all over. They all tried to persuade Joe to stick, but he said the wise play was to quit. Maybe he was right. What do you think?

SISSY MEEKER AND THE DOUBLE-CROSS

Coach Boles had just returned to St. James after a three days' absence in Philadelphia. His visit there has nothing to do with what follows any further than what had developed during his absence. And Captain Hazelet didn't keep him waiting long for the news.

"He's a bear, Coach," he said enthusiastically. "His first day out he played right tackle for the scrubs, and he tore the varsity line to bits. Second day, ditto. And yesterday he played against me, and I had the busiest afternoon of my life. Some of the gang believe he put it over me, but of course I didn't extend myself."

"Of course not," said Coach Boles, with a nice shading of sarcasm that went over Bill's head. "He will look awful sweet at left tackle," he went on. "That side of the line was a little weak anyway."

"H'm," grunted Coach Boles.

"He's got only one fault," said Hazelet after a minute's pause. "He has a baby voice that sounds absolutely 100 per cent sissy. Can you beat it?"

"Well, Bill," answered Coach Boles, "I've been coaching for a number of years, and I never figured a voice had anything to do with football ability."

"Of course not," said Bill, getting to his feet. "Well, so long, Coach, I'm off," and he went out, smiling his winning, ever-ready smile.

But Coach Boles didn't smile back. There was something about this popular football captain that he didn't like. His smile was a little too ready; he talked too much. But there was nothing tangible—nothing you could definitely put your finger on and say, "This is the cause for my dislike."

Coach Boles sat for a long time looking out over the campus. In the still air of the dreamy autumn day the leaves from the huge old elms and maples floated downward and settled on the leaf-strewn lawn as silently as brown feathers.

"I can't help my dislike," he said half aloud. "But I *can* help showing it," and turned to his work on the desk, closing out the pleasing picture of St. James's ivy-covered walls and the stately trees that marked the campus, gleaming wanly in the late autumn sun.

A big squad was at the field when Coach Boles arrived. The scrubs, chattering like magpies and overspilling with pep, were running through

signal drill. The varsity were passing two footballs. A half-dozen "rookies" were pegging away at the tackling dummy. And off to one side was Captain Hazelet in earnest conversation with a tall, awkward youth.

"Coach Boles," said Hazelet stepping forward, "I want you to meet Harold Meeker. He's the tackle I've been telling you about."

Coach Boles favored Harold with a keen, appraising glance as he shook hands. He was pleased with the looks of this awkward chap. He smiled.

"Why didn't you come out sooner?" he asked.

"Conditions," said Harold in a high, piping voice. "I had to make up some math. Didn't have quite enough credits to get by."

"I see," said the coach. "All set now, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir," Harold answered, smiling.

"Good!" said Coach Boles, turning away.

Orders came thick and fast in his terse, sharp voice. In a very few minutes the squads were set up into three elevens, and nothing but the drumming of the flying feet and the sharp bark of the signal numbers broke the quiet. The scrubs and the third team—"the rookies"— began light scrimmage, but Coach Boles kept the varsity

repeating a play time after time. It was late afternoon before the scrubs and varsity put on a short scrimmage. Meeker was at left tackle for the scrubs, and his performance was excellent. Time and again, he smashed the varsity attack. Hazelet, at such periods, would glance knowingly at the coach, but the latter gave no sign that he noticed. After practice Hazelet walked to the gym with him.

"Isn't he the goods, Coach?" he questioned eagerly.

"Seems a very likely candidate," Coach Boles answered evenly.

Something in his tone puzzled Hazelet.

"Why—" he began.

But Coach Boles interrupted. "Bill," he said slowly, so that every word could sink in, "you're captain of the team. Don't show your preference for Meeker so plainly. The less promising candidates might accuse you of playing a favorite. Remember, the morale of the eleven is largely in your hands. If you want the best from each man, put your personal feelings in the background. Do you get me?"

"Yes, sir," answered Hazelet in a subdued voice.

He felt somehow that the coach was unfair. Nobody could be more determined to see the team

a winner than himself. Coach Boles knew the team's need for another tackle. Why was he crabbing? Meeker overtook him on his way to dinner.

"Better be careful," was Bill's greeting. "The coach resents our friendship."

Meeker was stunned for a second. He had never heard of any player on any team speaking disparagingly of his coach. But he hid his surprise.

"What's the idea?" he piped.

"Thinks personal friendship bad for team morale," Bill answered tersely.

"But I don't want to make the team except on merit," went on the ridiculous voice.

"Don't worry," said Bill. "You'll make the team. Cinch."

The season wore along, marked by two outstanding features. One of these—which everybody could see—was "Sissy" Meeker's playing at left tackle. He had been a fixture since the second game, and St. James was for him to a man, baby voice and all. When they weren't applauding his play, they cuffed him affectionately and called him the "boy soprano." The other thing—which nobody saw—was Bill Hazelet's resentful attitude toward Coach Boles. Even the coach, wise as a

fox to every phase of boy nature, was unconscious of Captain Hazelet's hatred. Bill kept it perfectly hidden. He held aloof from every team member as far as anything personal was concerned. His smile was just as ready, his greeting just as hearty. If any one noted his regular absences over Sunday, he gave no sign.

Hazelet played a remarkable game against Brookfield. His game was so good that a couple of college "scouts" marked him. But the eager congratulations of the St. James fellows fell on deaf ears. Usually praise was the breath of life to him. Now he received it with indifference.

"What ails old Bill?" they asked.

But no one knew the answer.

The Hull game was just two weeks away, and secret practice had been established. There was just one game that St. James could not afford to lose—just one game they would give the clothes off their backs to win. That was the Hull game. One of the oldest traditions at St. James was the ingrained desire to trounce this ancient and not too honorable rival. And never before had St. James's chance to take their old rivals into camp looked brighter. The team was overspilling with life and spirit—all but Bill. His performance had a sullen fire in it. Effective, yes; but not particularly

inspiring. Each day he seemed a little deeper sunk in gloom.

"He's gone stale," said Trainer Casey.

"No," answered Coach Boles, "I don't think so. Something is worrying him."

"Too bad," Casey remarked. "And him a fine free-handed boy."

Coach Boles gave Casey a sharp look. He started to say something, but changed his mind. For a long time he sat at his desk in the gym that evening. Bill was worried—that was as plain as a pike-staff. And because Coach Boles, somehow, disliked him, he forced himself to go over to his rooms.

Bill seemed in no sense surprised to see him, but welcomed him warmly.

"Bill," asked the coach, going straight to the root of the business, "what's your trouble?"

"Trouble?" Bill repeated in a puzzled tone.

"Yes, trouble," Coach Boles answered. "You've been getting deeper and deeper into the gloom for the past two weeks. Is it money?"

Bill stiffened, and the coach noted it.

"Wait a minute," he said. "I know what you are going to say. Don't say it. Don't let your pride blind you to the facts. If you're in trouble, make a clean breast of it, and we—you and I—

will get you out of it. Everybody makes mistakes, Bill. I'm not blaming you. Come, let's have it."

But Bill only shook his head. A queer, grateful light flared for a minute in his eyes at the coach's offer to help, but it died quickly.

"No," he said slowly, "I appreciate your offer, Coach. But nobody can help me in this business. It's partly my own fault—partly some one else's. That's why I can't make a clean breast of it. But it was mighty square of you to offer help."

Coach Boles was not convinced that any one besides Bill was at fault. Bill's story that it was partly his own fault and partly some one else's didn't have the right ring. And yet on what grounds could he base this doubt? He hadn't a single fact in evidence.

"I ought to be ashamed of myself," he said half aloud as he walked toward his lodgings. "The boy is square, and I'm letting my prejudice warp my judgment. Poor business for a coach!"

Two days later Bill was excused from practice, and disappeared. But he showed up the next day, and seemed as sullen as ever.

"The devil take the boy!" said Casey to Coach Boles. "His gloomin' is demoralizin' the whole club! A taste of the strap would do no harm."

Coach Boles smiled.

"If the strap would make him disgorge the trouble," he said, "I might be tempted to try it."

"Trouble is right!" said Casey. "What with sore muscles and bitter hearts, a trainer has a hard life, Mr. Boles."

"Has anybody spilled anything, Mike?" the coach asked.

"No," Casey answered, "but there's black looks and mutterin' a-plenty. Has the boy no friends at all?"

Coach Boles was silent. No friends? Evidently not. That being the case, wasn't his duty clear? Thoughtless boys intent on winning football games might be excused for resenting Bill's attitude, but a coach was in a different position.

That night he went again to Bill's room. But the offer of friendship he came to make was not delivered. Bill was not in his room. Nor did the coach find him anywhere. He searched the ice-cream parlors, the movie theater, the dorm. No Bill. Coach Boles went to bed with the bitter conviction that he had kept the letter but broken the spirit of his duty. Coaches have many bad hours worrying over their boys which the boys never realize or appreciate.

The day of the Hull game arrived, clear, cold, and windless. Eleven o'clock saw the last of the

Hull contingent arrive. The little town was gay with bunting, and the sharp air was full of noises—color venders, sandwich men, rival cheers. By one-thirty the stands were nearly full, and rival cheer leaders were urging their cohorts into a frenzy of noise. But to the waiting teams this noise came but faintly.

It lacked just ten minutes of two when the St. James squad, thirty of them, trotted out on the field, Bill at the head. To the home crowd's surprise, he was smiling. "Confidence," said the less experienced. "Nerves," said the older heads. Hull kept the crowd waiting until the fifty-ninth minute. But when they did come, the noise that greeted them was longer and louder because of its delay.

Hull won the toss, and chose the south goal. A roar went up when King, the St. James left guard, kicked off to Hull's five-yard mark. Then the crowd settled down to watch.

The Hull quarter dodged back for thirty yards before he was downed. Hull's right half bored through Captain Hazelet for seven yards; their full back added two more at the same spot. A forward pass fizzled—but the left half gained the necessary distance around right end Matthews. Then, to everybody's surprise, Hull kicked from

regular formation. Carson recovered the oval, but was nailed in his tracks. A line play through Captain Hazelet failed, but one on the opposite side of the line was good for five, "Sissy" Meeker opening a beautiful hole. Reeves—left half—got four more around right end, and Captain Hazelet signaled for a punt. Bissell, Hull's left tackle, broke through Hazelet and blocked the kick. Wilson, Hull's right end, fell on the ball twenty yards from the goal.

Hull's rooters went wild. They went wilder when Captain Flint booted the ball over for a field goal on the very next play. It had taken Hull just seven minutes to score.

St. James was stunned. They kicked off to Hull's forty-yard mark. Captain Flint caught the ball, ran ten yards, and then kicked a beautiful fifty-yard spiral. It was good football, and it caught St. James off their guard—all but "Sissy" Meeker, who, for some unaccountable reason, had hung back. Grabbing the ball, he cut over to the extreme left side of the field and set sail for Hull's goal. For forty yards he fought his way, going down at last under a pile of Hull tacklers.

"It's the Boy Soprano!" came a voice from the St. James stand. Then there was an avalanche of noise.

Mowbray cut over to the extreme left and set sail for Hull's goal

Two line plays and a forward pass netted fifteen yards. Hull stopped the next play for a loss, but was penalized for offside play. Black, right half, tried through Captain Hazelet, but gained nothing.

"What's the matter with Bill?" asked a rooter for St. James.

A score of others were asking the same question, but none with the same idea in mind as Coach Boles. Captain Hazelet kept barking signals, and the ball moved slowly toward the Hull goal. Hull fought like wild cats, disputing every inch of ground. The quarter ended with a St. James first down eighteen yards from the goal.

Three subs went into the Hull line-up as the teams changed goals. St. James remained intact. There was no reason why Coach Boles should use substitutes. Every man was playing top notch ball—but Captain Hazelet. And Coach Boles couldn't force him out because he felt he had somehow done Hazelet an injustice. The teams lined up for the second quarter. Hazelet gave a signal. "Sissy" Meeker straightened up.

"Signals!" he piped in his high voice.

Captain Hazelet repeated it. Again Meeker asked for signals.

A Hull player laughed, and said in a mimicking voice, "Oh, custard pie!"

"What's the trouble?" asked Bill. "Didn't you hear the signal?"

"Sure, I heard it," answered Meeker, "but it's the wrong play."

"They've got two captains," sneered a Hull linesman. "No fair!"

"Signals!" barked Hazelet.

Again the line crouched, and this time a different set of numbers boomed out. Left half Reeves shot through the hole Meeker opened for four yards.

"Hold that line," yelled Flint, the Hull captain.

"Oh, custard pie!" squeaked Meeker.

"You big sissy!" growled the tackle opposite him.

"Same thing again!" Meeker said to Hazelet. "Right through this human ice wagon playing opposite me!"

But Captain Hazelet called for a forward instead. Moreland, Hull's left half, intercepted the oval and tore off forty-five yards before he was downed. Hull rooters rolled out their appreciation with a blast of noise.

"Flint, old kid," came a voice from the side lines, "if you love me, kick that ball!"

That seemed good advice, and Flint took it. The half ended with St. James in possession of the ball on their own twenty-two yard line. Their

attack had been wasted, and they dragged off to the gym, all but discouraged.

"What ails Bill Hazelet?" was the question that came from all sides. The St. James stand was buzzing.

"The big boob!" said one. "Calling for a forward when we had marched right through their line for yards and yards!"

"Hull has out-foxed us so far," said another, "but they've had all the breaks."

"Well, you might call it that," said another. "If Bill Hazelet has another brain storm, we're licked, that's flat!"

"If he stays through this next half, it will only be because Coach Boles has gone blind, deaf, and dumb!"

"Yeh. And Hull won't need any luck if Bill stays in there."

"Bill has shown about as much judgment as a three-year-old child!"

With this sort of sentiment prevailing, the St. James crowd watched Bill critically. Individually, they hated to call for his retirement. But they would have done it had they felt his indifferent playing was going to lose the game. St. James came first; personal feelings, afterward. That is the St. James tradition.

For ten minutes the ball seesawed back and forth, most of the time in St. James territory. Hull seemed satisfied to keep on the defensive as long as they were reasonably near St. James's goal. Her three points loomed bigger every minute. Suddenly St. James opened a fierce attack on Hull's line. For three first downs they looked invincible, then they faltered.

"Bah!" said a St. James rooter to his neighbor. "Coach Boles must be asleep! Bill Hazelet is dead on top!"

"Seems dead below the neck as well," his neighbor replied. "Look! They're taking him out!"

Ginger Knapp and Reeves were dragging Bill to the side lines. He fought them.

"I'm all right, I tell you," he kept saying over and over.

After a delay, he went back at right tackle.

"*Good* night!" said the pessimistic rooter. "We're done for!"

"Not yet," said his friend. "The Boy Soprano is giving signals."

It was true. The high piping voice was rasping out signal after signal. He drove the team with furious speed. For the first few signals Hull jeered at the piping voice. But the brain behind that voice suddenly directed a bewildering attack

by the forward-pass route. Ten-, nine-, twelve-, and fifteen-yard gains were torn off with demoralizing speed. The blond head and baby voice of "Sissy" Meeker dominated the whole field. Hull fought stubbornly, but wilted slowly before this fiery attack. The St. James stand was a fury of noise which became a steady roar when big Steve McClintock, the full back, tore across the line for a touchdown just as the third quarter ended.

Nor did Meeker ease off after the fourth period began. Faster and faster he drove the team. Every three or four downs he called for a substitute. Bill Hazelet was playing like a wild man. When Sissy Meeker called a play through him, he opened a hole big enough to send a horse through. By the time little Carson, the quarter back, dodged his way to the second touchdown, there were only four of the first-string team left.

Hull's team was in a similar situation. But it would have made no difference to St. James. This madman of a Meeker was invincible. The whole squad had caught the fire of his furious determination, and played with a dash that was "unstoppable." Hull had the ball for a few minutes, but St. James tore their attack to bits. The final whistle found them but fifteen yards from Hull's goal. Another two minutes would have added another touchdown.

"You've a wonderful team here, Boles," said Pratt, the Hull coach. "I'd give a thousand dollars for that left tackle of yours."

"Good, isn't he?" asked Coach Boles.

"Good? Huh, he's the best kid tackle I ever saw!" Pratt answered.

A huge bonfire was being lighted at the far end of the campus. The chill night air was filled with the sounds of cheers and songs and the laughter that comes from victorious achievement. By twos and threes and half-dozens St. James was moving toward the bonfire. But neither Captain Hazelet, who sat moodily in his Morris chair, nor "Sissy" Meeker, who sprawled comfortably on Cap's bed, made any move to join the throng assembling on the far end of the campus.

A rap sounded on the door. At Captain Hazelet's grunted "Come in," the knob turned and Coach Boles stood in the doorway. Hazelet got slowly to his feet.

"Not intruding, am I?" asked Coach Boles.

"'Course not," answered Hazelet, shoving the Morris chair toward him.

"First, I want to congratulate you both on your game today, and second, I want to know why you two are mewed up here in this room when there's a bonfire assembly on," said the coach.

Sissy started to say something, but Hazelet stopped him.

"I'll tell it myself," said he, "but before I begin I want you to understand that neither one of you could hate me as badly as I hate myself."

He paused for a second. Then he went on doggedly, "I was to get a hundred dollars for throwing today's game."

Coach Boles's eyes widened with a sudden flare of anger, but he said nothing.

"I tried to kid myself into believing my personal honor was more precious than loyalty to St. James," said Hazelet. "I honestly tried to throw the game, if there is any honor in a thing like that. You saw for yourself how the Hull backs went through me. Sissy, here, got wise to me somehow. Remember how he kept squealing 'Signals!' up near Hull's goal?"

Boles nodded, his lips set in a grim line.

"Well, that started it. When I got that rap on the head, in the third quarter, Sissy saw his chance. He came up close and said in a low voice, 'I'll give the signals from here on. I'm next to your crooked stuff. Get in there and give everything you've got, or I'll bawl you out so loud everybody in Texas will hear it!' It wasn't so much what he said that did it. That bump on the head

had knocked some sense into me somehow, and I saw myself as I actually was. I'm sorrier than anybody else could possibly be over the whole business. That's why I can't face the boys I tried to cheat and betray. And—and, I guess that's all."

Outside, some boys went by singing "The Honor of St. James." Tears glistened in Hazelet's eyes.

"You hear that?" he asked. Then he walked to the window and stood looking out into the night.

Coach Boles came over and put his hand on Hazelet's shoulder.

"Bill," he said, "treachery is bad business. You'd better be in debt up to your neck than double-cross your friends. I want you to promise me two things: First—the next time you get into trouble, come straight to me, will you?"

Hazelet nodded, and gritted out a hoarse "Yes."

"And the second thing—and this includes you, Harold," turning toward Sissy, who was sitting on the edge of the bed, "let's all forget it, and start over again."

"You're a sport, Coach. Sure, we'll forget it," said Sissy. "Bill's learned his lesson. It's not likely he'll slip again."

Bill couldn't say anything because of the lump in his throat. But he grinned happily as they started for the bonfire at the end of the campus.

There wasn't a point of similarity between them. Jim was tall, black-haired, dark-eyed—a dashing, aggressive sort, just a wee bit too fond of himself, but an all-round good fellow. Sam, two years younger, was four inches shorter, blue-eyed, freckle-faced, red-haired, and quiet as a clam. A good many fellows thought there was another point of difference—that Jim had courage, and that Sam was yellow. Some of them think so yet. So here is the whole thing set down just as it happened, and you can judge for yourself.

It was Jim's second year at St. James. Of course, he introduced Sam everywhere, and everyone was glad to welcome the younger brother. Jim was an unusually good back, and a prep school is like any other place as far as a star athlete is concerned. Jim was welcome everywhere. The St. James crowd would have made a place for any relative of his, on his account. You know how that is.

Jim was pretty busy with football, and, after he saw that Sam was introduced to everybody who was "anybody," he left him to his own devices. But

that was no hardship for Sam. He loved to study, and he was one of those plodders who had to strive for everything he got. He went to his work, hammer and tongs, and about the only time any one saw him was with Jim in the evenings. So it wasn't long until Sam was known as a "greasy grind"—nothing like his tall, handsome, dashing brother.

It was well along in October when the first thing that drew St. James's attention to Sam happened. For some reason the football squad was small that year, and the scrub team dwindled down until Coach Boles had to make strenuous efforts to find enough men to give the varsity scrimmage work. Of course, there was no valid *reason* for this. But there was an *excuse,* and the excuse was that there was hardly an outside chance to displace any regular or even a first-string sub. Poor school spirit? It was; but this is the story just as it happened.

Coach Boles finally became so desperate that he made a personal appeal one morning at chapel. He talked quite plainly about the backsliders and shirkers. He said the world has a mighty poor opinion of quitters and slackers, and he held nothing but contempt for any man who was yellow enough to dodge his share of the load. Most of the varsity

squad didn't let the talk sink in very deep, but it was evident that Jim was getting pretty well worked up over it. Jim and Bunny Pierce were close friends, pledged to the same fraternity.

"This hits the kid brother," Jim whispered. "I'm going to speak to him at lunch time."

"Better not," Bunny replied. "Sam seems to have a mind of his own, and he wouldn't thank you for calling his attention to this football stuff."

But Jim wasn't convinced. At noontime he mentioned it, just as he had said he would.

"I want to see you in football togs this afternoon, Sam," he said.

"Not today, you won't," Sam answered. "I'm behind in math, and I've got to catch up.

"So you think a few pages of math is worth losing your self-respect over, do you?"

There was a nasty look in Jim's eyes, and his voice had an edge.

"I don't get you," said Sam in a puzzled tone.

"Why, you poor fish!" Jim exclaimed peevishly. "Coach Boles practically called you yellow, and you hide behind your old math!"

"Well, football is not the only thing. I'm pledged to do my studies, and I owe them my first support. After that, I'm willing to play football. But I'm not keen for it, and you know it."

Sam's voice was just as quiet and cool as could be.

For a minute Jim eyed him as if he were some strange sort of animal. Then he said, "Since you're so keen on giving your support where it properly belongs, you might do well to consider what you owe the name of Bicknell," and he turned and left Sam without another word.

Bunny more than half expected to see Sam on the practice field that day. But, true to his word, he didn't show up. He was plugging away at his math. Jim never mentioned it, and the days slipped by and Bunny forgot all about it. There were plenty of scrubs out since that morning Coach Boles made his talk, so Sam was not missed. It was over a week later when he came out of the gym one afternoon in football clothes.

"Glad to see you come out, Sam," said Bunny.

Sam smiled.

"Well, I've come out because I think it's my duty. I hate football," he said.

"Too bad," Bunny answered. "The fellows that like it usually make the best players."

Sam nodded, and they walked over to the field. They didn't talk much, and Bunny kept studying him. His talk about "duty" didn't strike Bunny very well. It sounded too much like a "sis." But

he wasn't exactly a "sis," either. It was more like a pose of "lofty mind," and all that. Well, "it takes all kinds to make a world," Bunny said to himself. And yet he was a little sorry. Sam was Jim's brother, and Jim was certainly a prince of a chap. Pretty tough to have a high-brow brother who shouted about duty when the rest of the bunch were playing football for the glory of old St. James. These were the thoughts that went through Bunny's mind.

Bunny didn't see Sam again that day; he didn't know whether Jim saw him or not; he didn't mention it. Another week went by, and then one day Sam got a chance against the varsity. He went in at left half, and the first time he took the ball he tore a hole in the varsity line that made them gasp. Then he repeated it with the same play. When he did it the third time, Coach Boles stopped play.

"Wake up there, Lynn! You, too, Holbrook! This red-headed back made you both look bad," he said.

Holbrook and Lynn grinned in a sickly sort of way. Sam slashed into them a fourth time for eight yards. Most coaches would have roasted Holbrook and Lynn, or chased them to the showers; but *not this* coach. He called to the

scrub captain, "Send that play in there till they learn to stop it!"

Four times more the scrubs shot Sam into them, the last three for no gain. The entire affair was puzzling. Why should Sam tear through them so often, and then be so suddenly and completely stopped? Lynn and Holbrook were topnotch linemen. It didn't stand to reason that Sam could go through them twice in succession. Yet he had gone through half a dozen times. Bunny was convinced that Coach Boles understood it when he smiled and dismissed practice.

By this time St. James was coming to the important games in its schedule. Sam kept working away with the scrubs, and was at left half pretty regularly.

It was the Thursday before the Brookfield game, and that meant the final scrimmage practice. St. James never did anything but signal work on Fridays. Sam was at left half for the scrubs, and the scrimmage work was lively. Coach Boles had the varsity on defense, with the scrubs using a half dozen formations (Brookfield's), and he kept the varsity on the jump. Jim was working at left half for the varsity. Then suddenly the coach shouted something to the scrub captain, and from a forward-pass formation

the scrub back field tore around right end with Sam carrying the ball.

It was a beautiful play, and caught the varsity completely unaware. The interference got bumped off, but Sam was still free and running strong. Jim came for him at a long slant, and everybody slowed up to see what would happen when the brothers met head on. And what happened, you'd never guess. Sam stopped dead still before Jim got within five strides! The scrubs had been screaming, "Go on, Red! Attaboy, Red!" but when he stopped dead in his tracks, the noise died down as if some one had smothered it under a blanket. Jim's face was twisted with rage at Sam's exhibition of yellow.

"Red," he gasped. "Red, eh? You look more like saffron to me!"

Somebody in the crowd said, "Saffron Sam," and two or three laughed. But Sam didn't laugh. He stood there looking at Jim with a puzzled expression. Jim turned his back on him without another word. There might have been a chance to cover up Sam's mistake if it hadn't been Thursday. There was always a big audience out on scrimmage day, and bad news travels just as fast at prep school as anywhere.

The practice went on, of course, and Jim played

like a wild man. Every time he tackled, he would hit the runner like a tornado. Both teams understood it—he was trying to cover up Sam's show of yellow by putting all his pep into the practice. Sam stalked off to the gym, the best-hated boy at St. James.

After signal drill Friday St. James caught an early train for Brookfield. It was a four-hour ride, and Coach Boles always took the team up the night before, in order to avoid a long, tiresome train ride just before the game. Jim seemed normal enough, and apparently had pushed the memory of Sam's mistake far to the rear of his mind. No, he hadn't forgotten it. No fellow forgets a thing like that about his own brother.

"Bunny," Jim said, as the train rattled along through the night, "I want your opinion about Sam."

"There's only one opinion possible," said Bunny.

"You mean you think he's yellow?"

Bunny nodded. Then he said, "I'm mighty sorry, old man. But what else can I think?"

For a few minutes, they rode in silence.

Then Jim said, "I think I ought to tell you that I was to blame for Sam's good showing the first day he worked on the scrub team. You see, Bunny, I'm anxious for Sam to make good as a

football player. He's always hated it, and he only came out this fall because Coach Boles made such a strong talk that morning at chapel. Sam ought to get credit for that much."

"Sure, he ought," Bunny answered. "And I think he does, from the older fellows."

"Well, I fixed it with Holbrook and Lynn to let Sam dribble through if he hit their side of the line. I figured if he made a showing he might get interested," Jim explained.

"You didn't expect you'd fool Coach Boles by any such play, did you?"

"I didn't give the coach a thought," admitted Jim.

"You took an awful chance," Bunny said. "You remember what he did to Walt Hedrick last year for pulling one something like that."

"Yes, I remember," Jim answered. "But I'd have taken my medicine without any whimpering, if only Sam hadn't showed yellow yesterday afternoon. I can't understand it, Bunny. The kid isn't really yellow. I've seen him in a dozen situations that called for real nerve. And he's always showed true blue."

"What does he say for himself?"

"He said he didn't want to see me take a chance tackling him so near a big game. Can you beat

it? What's one tackle more or less?" said Jim disgustedly, and looked out into the night.

Bunny could think of nothing to say. It was one of those situations that a fellow can't help.

After a while, Jim said, "What I wanted to ask you was this: I haven't written to my father or mother about it, and I don't know whether I ought to mention it or not. Of course, everybody at St. James believes he's a quitter—you heard that fellow call out 'Saffron Sam.' "

"Yes, I heard it," Bunny answered. "It's tough, but I can figure only one way out: Sam will have to fight his way through alone. I can't see where you'd help anything by spilling it to your father and mother. They'd feel worse about it than you do, or Sam either. I don't believe he appreciates how bad he looks to the St. James crowd."

"Well," said Jim, "he will have plenty of chance to find it out, and in a way he's got it coming to him."

"At the same time you can't help feeling sorry for him, is that it?" asked Bunny.

Jim nodded.

St. James played Brookfield to a standstill next day. The final score was 7 to 7. Brookfield had expected to win; and so had St. James. But both teams showed such a fine defense that the

attack had crumbled. Jim played his usual high-class game, and his worry over Sam didn't seem to slow him up a bit. But he hadn't forgotten it.

When the scrubs lined up against the varsity for scrimmage the following Thursday Jim looked nervous. Sam was there on the scrub back field, as serious as ever. The scrubs called him "Saffron" and "Saff," and he didn't even seem to resent it.

"Spiritless ass!" said Jim to Bunny quietly. "I wonder what's got into him?"

Then Coach Boles broke in. You never could tell what he would do, nor when he would do it.

"Murphy, take Jim Bicknell's place at left half," he said.

For a minute the field was still as a tomb. There wasn't a player there who didn't understand and appreciate what the coach had done. Jim walked to the side lines, and scrimmage began. Sam was in it up to his neck. He made such a good showing that the coach put him in at left half on the varsity for the last few minutes, but Sam was confused and bungled several plays. The scrubs kidded him, good naturedly enough, but it seemed to confuse Sam. He couldn't get himself in hand.

"What ails him?" Bunny asked the coach as they left the field.

"Nervous and green," said he. "Most of them are, first time."

"Is he yellow?"

Coach Boles smiled his slow smile.

"He looked like it last Thursday, didn't he?" he asked.

"Yes," Bunny admitted, "he sure did."

"Well, don't be *too* sure about that," said the coach. His voice was hard, and Bunny knew the conversation was over.

The football season ended at last, and in a way no one was sorry. Sam never came out after the day just mentioned. He just kept plugging along, doing well with his studies, but not trying to make any friends. The chances are he couldn't have made very many even if he'd tried. Then one day—a cold one in January—a different slant was given the thing. It was after basket-ball practice, and the candidates were splashing around in the showers. Jim was rubbing himself with a turkish towel when Art Gerlock came strolling in. Art was a high brow—editor of the school paper, captain of the debating team, and a shark on philosophy.

"Well," he asked, "how are the toiling athletes?"

"You honor us with your question," said Jim sarcastically.

He and Art never had been friends.

"Yes," answered Art, "I was about to call your attention to it. The *Beetle* proposes to run a story about the basket-ball team next week. I trust that you will appreciate the honor we do you then, as now."

Jim had to grin, and there was a patter of laughter. Art was an owlish sort of chap. From the back of the room somewhere came a voice:

"How about 'Saffron Sam'?"

Jim flushed, and moistened his lips with his tongue.

But, before he could say anything, Art rasped out, "Who said that?"

There was no answer. Whoever had said it did not seem anxious to reveal his identity.

"There seems to be a feeling about this Saffron Sam here in St. James that is very distasteful. The gentleman who so bravely asked the question will do himself a favor by giving his undivided attention while I propound this question: How many of you, knowing yourselves as deeply disliked as Sam Bicknell does, would stick it out? These vindictive innuendoes you indulge in indicate a low mind. Think this over." And Art stalked out of the shower room in a painful silence.

"Think Art's talk will make any difference?" Bunny asked Jim on the way to dinner.

He shook his head gloomily. "No," he said, "I don't. But it was white of Art to bawl that chap out, whoever he was."

But it made a difference with Bunny. He was like most young fellows who have an idea that all courage is physical. While not trying to condone Sam's mistake, he had to admit he showed courage to stick when the whole school held him in more or less contempt.

It was three days later that Jim received a long-distance phone message that his mother was dangerously ill. Bunny rushed out for a time-table while Jim went to find Sam. Bunny was back in ten minutes, but it was a half hour before the brothers returned.

"You have just fifteen minutes to catch the Colonial Limited," Bunny warned them.

"Got any money?" asked Sam.

Jim's face flushed up, and he began to fumble in his pockets.

"Here," said Sam, holding out a ten-dollar note.

They had to run halfway to the station. Jim bought a ticket, and started for the train shed just as the express pulled in with whistling brakes.

As he neared the train, Jim looked over his shoulder and then swung round.

"Where's Sam?" he asked.

"He was just behind you at the ticket window," Bunny answered. "I thought he followed us out."

They ran up and down the platform calling his name, but without getting a response. Jim was wild.

"Don't worry," Bunny said, "he's on the train somewhere. You'll find him before you ride five miles."

Bunny didn't give the affair much thought. There was a crowd at the station, and Sam might have been separated from Jim easily enough. Besides, the express was a long one, and Sam might have slipped into any one of a half-dozen coaches.

Bunny received a wire from Jim the next day. Sam had turned up all right, and their mother was a little better.

It was two weeks before they returned. Of course, Jim was happy over his mother's recovery. He told Bunny what a narrow escape she had had, and then Bunny remembered about losing Sam at the station.

"How about Sam? Where did you find him?" he asked.

When Jim finished telling him, Bunny must have looked his doubts.

"You don't believe it, do you?" he asked.

"I'll believe it if you insist, but it's asking a good deal," answered Bunny.

"It's the absolute truth," Jim said. "I wouldn't have believed it myself, if I hadn't seen it."

"You owe it to Sam to tell the St. James crowd all about it," Bunny pointed out.

"That's what I thought, too," Jim answered. "But Sam won't stand for it, and I promised I wouldn't spill it except to you."

"Well, I'll see that the right fellow hears about it," Bunny said, and he told Coach Boles.

He didn't seem a bit surprised. That's where an older man always has the better of a youngster. He's had so much more experience that he takes things more coolly. But he felt just as they did—that some of the crowd ought to know. That was why he told this little story one late afternoon in February:

"Most of you remember the afternoon last fall when Sam Bicknell showed that wide streak of yellow. He looked mighty bad, and he hadn't any friends after that play. In a way, it was his own fault. He knew the St. James boys would never quite overlook it, and he should have thought before he acted. Of course, you might say he showed a lot of sand to stay on here after what happened, and you'd be right about it, too. But

that would only prove one kind of courage—the moral kind.

"Some two weeks ago, Jim got a message from his father saying that Mrs. Bicknell was dangerously ill. Jim was broke, and Sam had just ten dollars, which he gave to Jim. It never seemed to occur to Jim that that ten-spot might be all Sam had. In the rush to get on the train, Jim lost track of Sam, and he spent five awful hours on that train worrying about his mother and Sam.

"When the train pulled into the Bicknells' home town, Jim was the first one off. And the first person he met was Sam, crawling out from under a coach. He had lain for five hours on the truck timbers, his face three inches from the coach floor, his back resting on the truck timbers. When Jim asked him why he hadn't told him that he had only ten dollars, and why he didn't borrow some money, Sam replied that there wasn't time, and even if there had been he didn't know anyone in St. James who would have loaned him any. He knew they thought him yellow, and he was too proud to ask a favor from boys who held him in contempt.

"I'm going to leave it to your judgment as to how much courage it takes to crawl in between the floor and truck of a passenger coach and ride there for

five hours, with the temperature at twenty above zero."

They called him "Saffron Sam" all through his prep-school course. Lots of them never learned the truth, but there were a few who did. And, if you ask any of *them* who is the pluckiest kid of their acquaintance, you always get the same answer: "Saffron Sam."

SNAP JUDGMENT

For three days Tommy Alden, the St. James varsity left end, had been "off his feed." He had slept badly, too, and the signals kept him awake till the "wee sma' hours." Then had come the Hanford game. For two periods he had played his usual clever game. Then he seemed to go into a trance. He missed two forward passes—didn't even try for them because he forgot his signals. The Hanford quarter back, a quick-thinking, keen-eyed chap, noted Tommy's abstraction, and shot three plays at him, which netted forty yards. Hanford rooters were wild with delight, and from the St. James side came calls for "Randall, Randall!"

But Tommy stopped the next play for a loss, and the cries died down perceptibly. For two more plays Hanford kept off of Tommy's side of the line. Then, with a sickening suddenness, the backfield swept around his end, completely boxing him. Hanford scored, and won the game. Even then Tommy didn't seem to realize it was his fault. He actually grinned at some of his friends on the side lines.

There was no celebration at St. James that night. The hours that might have been devoted to gathering barrels and crates for a bonfire were given over to a discussion of "What the deuce ails Tommy?"

Coach Boles was the only one except Tommy himself who was really concerned, however. The boys might wonder and condemn, but the burden of righting the situation was up to the coach, and he knew it perfectly well. Just what he ought to do first was not yet quite clear in his mind. He leaned back in his chair and placed his feet upon the desk. So absorbed did he become that Captain Bannister knocked four times before the coach recalled himself and called out, "Come in."

"Well," said Banny, tossing his cap on the desk, "they beat us."

The coach merely nodded, his mind was still entangled with the problem of Tommy's queer lapse. But Banny's next remark awakened him with a bang.

"It was Alden's fault. He quit like a yellow dog."

"You think so?" asked the coach, keeping a steady voice.

"I do," answered Bannister bluntly.

"That's a pretty sweeping remark, Banny," said Boles quietly.

"It is, sure. But I mean it. It's a rotten thing to say, and I haven't forgotten Tommy's work in the past," said Bannister slowly.

"Unless you can explain your point, you'd best lay off calling names," said the coach with just a note of warning in his voice.

"I *can* explain it, Coach, but I *can't* prove it," Bannister answered.

For a moment Banny looked absently through the window. A light rain was falling, and the street lamps were reflected in broken patches of yellow on the wet pavement. Then he went on:

"Tommy Alden and Joe Randall have been friends since they were old enough to walk. They've made a practice of boosting each other as long as I've known them. At first it was done openly; but it hasn't been for a long time. Their stuff is very smooth and really hard to get hold of. Tommy's a good end—you know that better than I do. Randall is good, too, but not quite Tommy's class. Well, they both know that neither of them can get Dave Garret's job on the other end. So what do they do? They frame it that Tommy gets a temporary lapse, and Randall takes his place. A varsity letter from St. James

means something at Princeton. Tommy's got his, but Randall hasn't. Randall's people have been away for several weeks, and Joe has been rooming with Tommy."

"H'm, seems a good deal of a chance for Tommy to take," the coach observed. "Why should he do it?"

"Yes, why indeed? That's what we don't know. I told you their work was smooth. Joe has got Tommy obligated to him somehow—saved his life, maybe," said Banny.

"Well, that's *some* obligation, I'd say. If that's true, Tommy owes Joe a *little* consideration, don't you think?" asked the coach.

"Sure," Banny admitted promptly. "But he'll have to find some other way to pay it than losing football games. If Tommy pulls that again, either he or I leave the team. That's flat. I won't captain a team where they do that 'friendship' stuff. Seems to me there's some things more important than selfishness when your team is out there playing their heads off to win."

Coach Boles hid a smile of approval behind his hand.

Then he asked, "What, for instance?"

"Well, school spirit, for instance, and clean sportsmanship. Why didn't Tommy come to me

and admit he was all in after he missed that forward, and got boxed three times?"

"Maybe he thought you'd consider him yellow if he did," said the coach.

"Better one man show yellow than let the whole team in for an undeserved licking. Why, we gained almost three times as much ground as they did. We should have won," said Banny stubbornly.

"Yes, you should have won," Coach Boles admitted. "But you lost, and you know what I think about whiners. I never heard you do this alibi thing, Banny. Don't say anything about it outside. Tommy has played some great games for St. James. If he's pulling anything phoney here, we'll find it out. If he isn't, you'd be doing him a great injustice. You see that, don't you?"

"Sure, I see it," answered Banny. "I'm not telling this for publication. Fat Watkins thinks the same as I do, but I didn't let him know that I agreed."

He got to his feet and took his cap from the desk.

"You did the square thing to put this up to me as you did, Banny. Good night."

"Good night, Coach."

As he passed the Alden house he looked up at

Tommy's window, where a light glowed behind the blinds.

"Playin' his ukelele, I'll bet," Banny grunted disgustedly.

He forgot for the moment the many good times he had had singing with that same ukelele in that same room whose lighted window glowed through the misty night.

Monday's practice was light, as usual. But Tuesday found the squad on hand for the usual grind. Randall was there, but Alden didn't appear. Banny saw the coach talking to Randall for a moment. There was nothing unusual about that, but it kept Banny's mind on a subject already beginning to occupy a considerable portion of his thoughts. Wednesday and Thursday proved off days, the rain turning the field into a quagmire of slippery, soggy turf. But Friday dawned crisp and clear and the squad was overspilling with pep. Tommy was back on the job, as good as ever.

"Do you suppose he got a rap on the head last Saturday that put him off?" Fat Watkins asked, referring to Tommy's temporary lapse.

"Maybe," answered Banny. "Pity he didn't get one that would have knocked him cold. We might have won then."

"Gee, you're a hard loser, Banny," said Fat.

"Yeh, I'm a hard loser. And some things make me a harder one," Banny remarked.

"You mean Tommy and Joe, eh?"

But Banny only smiled and shrugged.

The next day St. James was to entertain Melham Prep on the home lot. It was a cloudy day, and a raw northeast wind swept the field.

"If you win the toss," said Coach Boles, "choose the wind. It will give Kelly an extra five or ten yards on his kicks, and heaven knows he needs all the help he can get. And keep on the defensive the first period. I'm sending Joe in at left end to begin the game."

"And Tommy on the bench?" asked Bannister incredulously.

"Just so. You're a good guesser, Banny."

"But that's just what they want. A game with Melham will give Joe a letter. I—"

"Beat it," said the coach tersely. "The team's waiting for you."

The events of the past week had somewhat soured Bannister's disposition. But this final shot curdled it completely. What the deuce did Coach Boles mean by such a play? Was he putting this across for no other reason than to favor Joe and Tommy? They must have something "on" the coach. What

was it Boles said about obligations? The longer he thought about it, the angrier he became.

St. James won the toss, and ran Melham's kick-off back fifteen yards. If you think Banny was angry enough to disobey his coach's instructions, you're mistaken. He obeyed them to a dot, kicking the ball on the second or third down, regardless of the groans and remarks of disgust that floated to them from the side lines. And Joe Randall received his baptism of fire. The Melham captain, seeing a strange face at left end, shot play after play at Joe. But they failed to gain consistently. Time after time he spilled the runner after short gains, and twice for a loss. In spite of himself, Banny had to admire Joe's work. The quarter ended with the ball in mid-field.

While the teams changed goals, Banny kept looking toward Coach Boles, expecting to see Tommy come on the field. To his surprise, Tommy remained huddled in his blanket. The second period was about half completed when St. James suddenly abandoned defensive tactics and began a savage and determined attack. But the Melham defense was just a shade too strong. A half-dozen times they lost the down by inches.

Up to this time not a forward pass had St. James tried. Suddenly a Melham fumble gave Banny a

chance, and, almost before the Melham forwards got set, Banny shot the ball on a line to Joe, who "speared" it with one hand. With almost a clear field, Joe sprinted for Melham's goal, and, before Melham really awoke to the danger, the ball was resting behind the posts, clasped tightly in Joe's hands. In the bedlam of noise that naturally followed, Banny bent over and clapped Joe on the back.

"Great business, Joe!" he said.

Joe looked up with a sober face and said, "Thanks, Banny. Your pass was a dandy."

It wasn't so much the words as the way they were said. And Joe's face! Serious in such a moment! Banny was completely puzzled.

The next two periods found St. James on the defensive almost entirely. It also found Tommy still in his blanket, but, in the fresher surprise of Joe's sober acceptance of his captain's praise, this seemed of less importance. The game ended without further scoring.

The final game—Hull—was just two days away. Tommy was back at left end, and playing his old-time game. Everything was ready for the big game, and St. James's chances were better than even.

Coach Boles had mentioned Joe only once, and

then he had said to Banny, "How did you like his work?"

"Great, Coach. He was there 100 per cent, and I'd be unfair not to admit it," Banny answered.

"You surprised me when you picked that play that Joe scored on. After what you said, I figured you'd pass to Dave Garrett instead," said the coach.

This hurt, and Banny stiffened.

"Sorry you think me that kind of a guy. I'd never let a personal matter influence me on the field. When I'm out there, I give all there's in me for old St. James, and I figure the other ten players feel the same. If they don't, I want to know about it," and he walked away without another word.

The coach looked after him and smiled, but he offered no explanation.

Hull came into St. James with a band, two hundred rabid rooters, and all the confidence there was. The gym was a hive of healthy young humans a-buzz with all the talk based on imagination, rumor, and fact. Long before the whistle opening the afternoon's festivities blew, the crowds were assembled. The one thing that most interested St. James was: Who would play left end? With Joe's great playing of the week before

still fresh in their minds, there seemed a division of opinion as to who would, or should, get the place. But when Tommy took the position for a short signal drill, all doubts seemed settled. And he justified his selection. Even Dave Garrett, the opposite end, was no better than Tommy.

Back and forth the battle raged, neither team having a consistent attack, and both teams showing a great defense. But St. James was having the worst of the breaks. A half-dozen times dangerous plays failed by a hair. On the other hand, the Hull captain, Talmadge, was getting by frequently with plays that should have been blocked promptly.

It was late in the fourth period that Tommy was hurt. He was patched up and led off the field, and Joe trotted out to left end.

An exchange of punts had given St. James the ball on the Hull forty-yard mark. Talmadge, who had seen the new end come in, knew his play a week ago had beaten Melham. Hull knew a forward pass was due, and the fresh player was the logical selection to receive it. But one of the things that made Banny a great captain was his strategy. At the signal, both Garrett and Joe swung out, Joe a bit wider than his wingmate. Then came the pass, straight and true, to—Dave's hands. Like a mad thing, he tore down the field,

stiff-arming the Hull quarter who ran to intercept him. Banny added a point with a goal after the touchdown.

With three minutes to play, Hull doggedly held on and took the ball in mid-field. Two plays at the line were fruitless—they were meant to be. Hull had a wise captain also. These line plays directed at the tackle on Joe's side were intended solely to draw him in, and they worked. Suddenly the interference swept toward him. He was boxed but he held his feet. The runner had got by, and with the speed of desperation Joe started in pursuit. The St. James quarter came streaking across the field at an angle. The Hull back, a clever dodger, evaded the St. James backs, and set sail for the St. James goal. He dodged the St. James quarter also, but he lost a precious second doing it. The yell of warning from his team mates reached him, but too late. Desperately he strove to throw himself aside. Then Joe's shoulder hit him just below the knees, and his arms wrapped themselves around the runner's legs. There was a sudden flare of red and green and yellow light in Joe's head, then darkness.

Fifteen minutes later, Joe awoke in the gym. The place was a bedlam of noise. Coach Boles bent over him.

"Well, how is it, old man?" he asked.

"My head aches a bit. Otherwise, I feel quite all right. Did we win?" he asked quietly.

"You bet we did," the coach answered.

It was the following Wednesday. School would close for Thanksgiving, and assembly was called for eleven o'clock. There would be speeches and songs, and finally the presentation of sweaters and the football letters to the team. The singing had already begun when Banny, mounting the stairs three at a time, ran into Dean Gales and Coach Boles at the doorway.

"Under the circumstances we had best postpone the presentation of lettered sweaters," Mr. Gales was saying. "I will announce that the sweaters have not arrived."

"But they have, and the boys know it. I'll fix it with them. Leave it to me," said the coach.

Banny ducked through the door and left them. He wasn't sure what had happened, and he couldn't ask without seeming impertinent. And he felt somehow that he was out of favor with the coach. He had a high respect for Coach Boles, but he had some pride, too. If the coach wanted to tell him anything, all right; he would gladly listen. There was some obstacle in the way of the distribution of the sweaters. He would have given

much to know what it was. If they didn't choose to tell him—well, he wouldn't ask. He crowded into a place beside Dave Garrett.

"Just the guy I want to see," said Dave.

And then, during the songs and cheers, he told Banny a story. It was short and to the point, and it caused Banny to do some quick thinking.

"Where did you hear this?" he asked.

"From the coach," answered Dave.

Coach Boles took the floor, smiling acknowledgment at the "three times three for Coach Boles" that roared out through the assembly hall.

"I am very sorry to announce that there has been a hitch in the plans for the sweaters. They were ordered in plenty of time, but, owing to an error somewhere, we are one sweater short—"

"Mr. Coach," said Banny, getting to his feet, "may I say a word?"

The coach turned toward him and bowed, then turned to the audience. "It gives me much pleasure to announce Captain Bannister."

For perhaps the first time in his life, Banny was embarrassed as he stood waiting for the cheers to subside.

"About two weeks ago I formed an unfair suspicion about two of my team mates, and I was wrong. I'm not going to mention any names, nor

make a long speech. One of these men went stale. The other one—his best friend—took his place. That in itself isn't so much. But when you know that the friend hates football, and only played because he felt it his duty to old St. James, I think it's a good deal. I suspected this was a frame-up to get the friend the varsity football letter, and I said so to Coach Boles. I was wrong. So the gang will get their sweaters as advertised. I will wait for mine," and he sat down in an uproar of cheering.

After assembly, Dean Gales shook Banny's hand and congratulated him on his good sportsmanship. Banny was too surprised to speak.

"Well, what do you *know* about that," he said half aloud as Dean Gales moved off.

"Oh, old fuss-button isn't half bad when you know him," said a voice behind him.

Banny turned.

"Say, I only just found out the truth about you two," he said. "I'm a rotter!"

"Forget it!" said Tommy.

Joe grinned at him with every evidence of good feeling.

"How about a hot chocolate at the Sugar Bowl?" Banny asked.

"You're on!" Joe and Tommy chorused.

Coach Boles watched them going down the street, arm in arm.

"Well, that will cure Banny of using snap judgment for life, I hope," he said half aloud.

Then he took the extra sweater (that was supposed to be lost) from a drawer, and went out of his office and closed the door.

THE SELFISHNESS OF DICK BALLARD

Dick Ballard, left guard on the St. James eleven (and one of the best they'd ever had), had quit football. He was trying—or going to try—for the Marshall Scholarship.

Dick had a disposition that was up around 100 per cent pleasant most of the time. Going out of his way to do some one a good turn was such a common thing that his friends grew to expect it. He could talk even a snob out of his shell and make him act like a human being—quite an achievement. Dick was one of the most popular chaps at St. James.

And so nobody thought very much about it when he missed the first few practice sessions at football. He was a "regular," and regulars always have a little more freedom. But when a whole week had gone by and Dick still was among the absent, his roommate, Jim Bicknell, mentioned it.

"What's the big idea? Aren't you coming out for the team this fall?"

"No," answered Dick, "I'm not."

Jim's jaw dropped.

"Did I get you right?" he stammered. "Did you say 'no?'"

"I certainly did," Dick calmly answered. "The Marshall Scholarship looks good to me, and I'm going after it."

"I don't see why you have to drop football to get it," Jim growled.

"The reason is clear enough," Dick explained. "This scholarship is no cinch, and football takes a lot of time. I'm not clever enough for both."

"Oh," said Jim.

It's strange how a fellow's mind becomes paralyzed at times. Jim thought of at least a dozen questions to ask later, but right then he couldn't think of a single one. So he went out to find Al Macklin or Fos Kelly who roomed next door. At the door he paused and asked, "No objection to my telling Al and Fos, is there?"

"None whatever," Dick answered with a wistful sort of smile.

When Jim broke the news, Fos went up in the air.

"He's slipping" he shouted. "Seven of his eight cylinders are missing!"

"Not so loud," cautioned Al. "He might hear."

"Hope he does," said Fos. "May wake him out of his trance."

"Well," Jim said, "a fellow isn't *bound* to play football."

"Of course not," Al remarked. "But, on the other hand, a fellow ought to have a good reason."

Jim mentioned the Marshall Scholarship. Fos snorted with disgust.

"Holy mackerel! He doesn't call *that* a reason, does he?" he demanded.

"He says so," answered Jim.

"Gee!" said Al. "Some people are sure hard to please. Here's Dick, with everything any reasonable person could want, grubbing for an old scholarship."

"Yeh," Jim replied, "it *is* funny."

"Very funny," said Fos. "Ha ha, or tee hee, or whatever is necessary to register laughter."

"What has Coach Boles to stick in Dick's place at left guard?" asked Al.

"A timely question!" Fos answered. "A freshman named Gallegher, who doesn't know a shin guard from a goal post; Herb Manton, last year's sub, with two left feet and no brains; and that snob Marshall, who knows all about tea fights, but has about as much football sense as you could put in an eyedropper!"

He turned and stalked out of the room without another word. Gallegher and Manton and

Marshall were all much better than Fos thought they were but they weren't in Dick's class by a long way.

Of course, the news spread through the whole school. There wasn't a soul at St. James who didn't know it. Many of the boys denounced Dick's attitude, too. People are selfish, when it's all said and done. They want the best. And Dick's leaving the team weakened it, no doubt of that. "Dick's selfishness" came to be a familiar expression around the campus. It didn't seem to affect him much—not, at least, from what any one could notice.

"The gang are panning you for a poor sport," Jim told him.

"I expected that," he answered. "That's part of the price I'm paying. You know, Jim, we never get anything for nothing."

The season slipped along, and St. James narrowly escaped defeat by a team they should have beaten with ease. It's not prejudice to say the weakness was at left guard. Marshall—his grandfather had endowed the scholarship that was causing most of the trouble—began to show fairly good form.

Then came the Brookfield game. Brookfield had a dandy team and might have won, anyway.

But St. James's chances departed when Marshall had his left leg twisted in the first quarter. The score was 13 to 7, and St. James was plunged in gloom. Jim met Dick just after the game.

"Tough luck, old man," Dick said.

"If you'd been where you belong, it wouldn't have happened," Jim gritted through his teeth.

It was an unreasonable thing to say, Jim realized, and he apologized for it afterward. Just at the minute, though, he was angry. You probably know just how he felt, without any explanations.

"I'm sorry, Jim," Dick answered, and turned away.

Coach Boles came up to the room that night and had a long talk with Dick. Dick didn't tell Jim much about it, but Jim decided that the coach had made him change his mind. He was right, too. Dick came out the following Tuesday and ran through signal drill at his old position. Naturally, the team was glad to have him back. They had "skull practice" that night at the training table, but Dick didn't attend. When Jim got back to the room, he was reading a letter that seemed to worry him.

"No bad news, I hope?" said Jim.

"Yes—and no," he answered. "Where is Coach Boles?"

"At the training table, I think," Jim replied. "At least, he was there a few minutes ago when I left."

Dick snatched up his hat and hurried out, stuffing the letter into his pocket. Something dropped out of it that Jim didn't notice until some time later. He picked it up. It was a newspaper clipping that told about Marshall breaking his leg in the last game. Jim couldn't see why anybody would send Dick a copy of that; he knew it before the newspapers printed it. And anyway, Marshall had only twisted his leg, he hadn't broken it.

Dick came back after Jim had gone to bed. He mentioned the clipping, and Dick said, "Oh, that's all right, Jim."

Jim thought he might say something, but he didn't. And, of course, Jim couldn't ask him anything personal—not and remain a gentleman.

Dick was out for practice next day, but Coach Boles wouldn't let him scrimmage. The reason for that was clear enough; a couple of days of signal drill isn't enough to put any one in shape to scrimmage. The scrub gave the varsity a busy twenty minutes, and Bugs Pennell, the varsity quarter, lost his temper.

"You play like a lot of dough-heads! You, Manton, show some pep! Farrell, you act as if

your feet were nailed down! Get in there, Carson, and quit imitating a wax figure! If you let that scrub tackle through you again, Crawford, I'll tell Dick Ballard on you!"

Everybody grinned at that last shot, even Dick. Bugs Pennell was a good chap, but he was like a lot of the St. James crowd—didn't understand Dick's position. Al unburdened himself on the way to dinner.

"Why do you let Bugs ride you, Dick?" he asked.

"What can I do?" Dick countered.

"Do? Holy cat! Fire back when he gets fresh," answered Al.

"The team's going badly enough without adding any internal row," answered Dick.

"Well, it's none of my business, Dick, but I wouldn't stand for Bugs or anybody giving *me* the razzberry," said Al.

But Dick didn't answer *that*.

After scrimmage on Thursday Dick found a telegram in his room.

"My mother's coming up for the Hull game, Jim. Gets here Saturday morning!"

"Great business!" Jim answered, trying to feel a little of Dick's enthusiasm, but not doing very well with it.

"She's been down at Pinehurst for a month," Dick explained. "Her health has been sort of bad for quite a while. But she must be feeling a lot better if she's coming up here. Gosh, I'm glad!"

"That's fine!" said Jim.

"Guess I'll go over and arrange for a room for her at Mrs. Staley's," Dick answered, grabbing his cap.

"Good idea," Jim called after him, but Dick probably didn't hear it.

Jim sat there for a while talking it over to himself. And finally he decided that Dick's mother must be a selfish sort. His ideas seemed fairly sound, too. She had been ill, and was inclined to think it was pretty serious. Dick's football worried her—it worries lots of mothers—so she had made him promise to give it up. This scholarship stuff was camouflage, pure and simple. Dick wasn't anxious to have the fellows think him yellow or selfish. So the scholarship was just the thing to smooth out his difficulties.

Jim wondered what Dick's mother would think when she heard some of the talk that was going round. And she'd be sure to hear it. There's always some old buzzard that's willing and anxious to spread the bad news, he told himself. It wasn't at all likely that she would understand the real

reason. If St. James would have had a regular topnotch eleven anyway Dick's defection wouldn't have looked so bad. But, with a mediocre team, and Dick one of its mainstays, it looked pretty blue. Old Dick would need every friend he had, no doubt about that.

The Friday before the Hull game was always a nerve-racking day for the team. They had signal drill—two grinding hours of it—and skull practice in the evening. Dick was all pep and excitement—more like himself than he had been for six weeks. Coach Boles looked at him sharply several times.

Al nudged Jim. "Look out!" he whispered. "The old fox knows something."

"Huh," Jim answered, "he isn't the only one. I know what explains Dick's pep. His mother's coming in tomorrow on the 10:20 express."

"The deuce she is!" said Al.

"Fact," said Jim. "But keep quiet about it."

Al nodded. After they started home, he said, "I'll bet it's all her fault—made Dick promise to give up football."

Jim didn't answer.

Dick stopped Jim coming from breakfast next morning.

"I want you and Al and Fos to go along to the station with me to meet my mother."

"Thanks, old man," said Jim. "I'll be glad to go."

"Get hold of Al and Fos, will you? I've got to stop at the barber shop."

"Sure," Jim answered. "See you at the station."

The first thing Fos said was, "I feel like a pallbearer. This is going to be a nice affair."

"Forget that sob stuff," Al answered. "It's rough on old Dick, and he'll need cheer, not crêpe."

"What makes you think it's going to be mournful?" Jim asked.

"It's a cinch that Mrs. Ballard is one of these fussy mothers that enjoys poor health. I'll bet she was the cause of Dick's quitting football," Fos explained.

"I hope you're wrong," said Al, "but I'm afraid you're right. Far as I can see, though, it looks as if Dick would start today against Hull."

"Nobody but Coach Boles knows the answer to that," said Jim.

The 10:20 was on time for once, and Dick reached the station just a minute before. The boys rushed down the platform to the sleepers. Jim saw Dick grinning and waving at a woman in the vestibule, but he couldn't believe it was Dick's mother. The next minute she was beside them, and was being introduced. She shook hands with a good strong grip, and looked them squarely in the eye.

And she didn't look anything like the sickly crank Jim had pictured in his mind. She spoke low and easily, and didn't fuss. She knew something about football, too. But what she was really interested in was Dick. The boys loaded them into a taxi and then walked up town. As soon as they were out of hearing, Fos laughed.

"We're a fine bunch of guessers," he said. "Dick's mother hadn't anything more to do with stopping his football than I did."

"She looks more like his older sister than his mother," Jim said.

"And not a very much older sister, at that," Al put in.

"Funny thing, but I never noticed a picture of her in your room," Fos remarked.

"It's there, just the same," Jim said, "but I never asked Dick about it. I thought it was a cousin or something."

They loafed around Beeston's for half an hour, and then started toward the training table. Fos was exulting about "our last meal of raw meat and fried whisk-brooms" when Al said, "Hello! Look what's coming out of Coach Boles's office!"

It was Dick and his mother.

Jim thought about it a good bit, but he hadn't much confidence in his conclusions, after making

such a bad guess about Dick's mother. When it's all said and done, there wasn't anything so very unusual about it. Dick had a right to introduce his mother to Coach Boles, as long as she was agreeable, Jim decided.

Al was right about Dick starting the game against Hull. He did more than that. If they'd all played as he did, Hull would have got an awful beating. St. James scored first on a lucky forward pass and kept the Hull backs out of their territory for most of the first half. But the third quarter hadn't been going five minutes when Hull got the ball and carried it eighty yards for a touchdown. Then they opened up with a forward-pass attack that had St. James gasping. They'd have scored if it hadn't been for Dick. He tackled a Hull back hard enough to knock him loose from the ball, and Al fell on it.

But St. James hadn't any attack. By fits and starts they'd gain; then they would falter and finally stop. The team had been an in-and-outer all season, and was playing true to form. Spike Williams tried a field goal at Hull's thirty-yard mark. It fell short a few feet, and St. James's best chance for a second score was gone.

Hull carried the oval on straight football right up the field for another touchdown. A fumbled

punt cost Hull a third touchdown, but St. James was beaten anyway—14-6. There wasn't anything sensational about the game. It was simply a case of a fair team, with a lot of luck, playing their hearts out to hold down the score. Hull was two touchdowns better than St. James at any time, and both teams knew it.

The cheering was for Dick about as often as for anybody else. St. James sticks to her own against any invader. The final whistle was certainly music to St. James.

"We'll get 'em next year," said Dick, clapping Jim on the shoulder as they left the field.

"Next year is a long time off," Jim answered. Anyhow, you'll be after that old scholarship. You'll have no time for football."

But Dick only grinned.

Coach Boles gave the team a dinner that night, which was a new departure at St. James. It was *some* dinner, too. Most of the team overate, and were proud of it. There was a lot of singing and all the yells, and then some. It must have been nearly ten o'clock when the speeches began. One might have thought St. James won, almost, from the talk Fos made. And Spike Williams, the captain, was almost as bad.

"What *is* all this?" Jim asked Al, who sat next

to him. "Usually the team acts like a class in embalming after a trimming from Hull."

Al didn't answer because Coach Boles stood up just then, and everybody became quiet.

"For the last six or seven weeks, there has been a lot of talk about Dick Ballard—" the coach began.

Dick jumped out of his chair and bolted. The coach looked surprised for a few seconds, and they could hear Dick clattering down the front steps.

"This talk was mostly a roast for Dick," Coach Boles went on, "because he quit football. The team needed him, and all St. James resented his action. He plugged away at the Marshall Scholarship. And he established a reputation as the most selfish boy in school. But the facts are going to prove just the reverse. His mother came to see him today, as you doubtless know, and she came mostly at my instigation. Several weeks ago a letter came from Mrs. Ballard's physician, with a newspaper clipping inclosed. This clipping was an account of the game in which Marshall 'broke' his leg. You will recall that Dick came out for signal drill the following Tuesday. Marshall's leg decided *that*. More than one of you thought Dick had promised his mother he wouldn't play any more football. Am I right?"

"Sure," said Jim, "I did."

"Same here," Fos admitted.

"Here, too," said Spike.

"Well," said Coach Boles, "she never asked any such promise. Last winter she was ill and her heart became affected. Her physician ordered absolute quiet and no excitement. And he put it up to Dick in such a way that Dick thought it his duty to quit football. That clipping came from this doctor with a letter explaining what might happen to Mrs. Ballard if Dick got hurt.

"Now, all this time, Dick had been writing his mother. He didn't mention football, and Mrs. Ballard couldn't understand it. His explanation about the scholarship worked for a while, but when the doctor's letter came, he was up against it. He brought the letter to me. I wrote the whole thing to Mrs. Ballard, advising her to come up for the Hull game. Dr. Banyard examined her heart and found it all right. So Dick was sent into the game."

They cheered Dick and Coach Boles.

And then Fos said, "Seems to me we owe Mrs. Ballard something. She's been a perfect sport through the whole business."

So they trooped down to Mrs. Staley's where Dick and his mother were having a quiet little visit.

Dick came out and was ordered to deliver up his mother.

"G'wan—" but he got no further.

Three or four boys grabbed him. Fos ran for the door and almost collided with Mrs. Ballard. He stammered and tried to apologize, and Mrs. Ballard smiled at him and called him "Fos." He was so embarrassed he couldn't talk—for the first time in his life. Somebody shouted "speech" and Dick picked his mother up and stood her on the porch rail.

"Oh," she said, "I couldn't make a speech for worlds. Dick has told me about it, and I love you all."

Her voice broke, and she dabbed her eyes with a handkerchief, while the crowd sang "The Honor of St. James" and gave yells with "Mrs. Ballard" on the end.

And the only person who thought Dick selfish was the night watchman, but that was only because the boys made such a racket he couldn't sleep.

THE UNDOING OF A SNOB

It was a fine warm day late in March. Walt Dixon was hitting to the infielders, who were making a lot of noise. Coach Boles was hitting to the outfielders. Bill Huling and two pitching candidates were warming up with Bunny Pierce, the first-string catcher, and Johnny Clarke was at the plate. The infielders began to drift in for hitting practice, and Johnny Clarke put on his protector and mask. The coach was just about to call one of the sub-pitchers to take the box when some one touched him on the arm.

"May I take a turn on the rubber, Mr. Coach?"

This chap was as funny looking as a comic valentine. He had on a faded blue uniform that was shrunk two sizes too small, and a cap two sizes too large. A flaming red jersey showed under his shirt. He had a blue stocking on one leg and a gray one on the other, and his feet were lost in a pair of man's-size, patent-leather, button shoes, and badly cracked ones, at that.

"What's *your* name?" asked the coach.

"J. Walters. I'm a pitcher."

"All right, get out there and pitch," Coach Boles answered, struggling to hide a smile.

Nobody paid any attention to Walters until he struck out Hallam, the third baseman, and Porter, the left fielder. Then Bill Huling caught sight of this new pitcher, and walked over to the third-base foul line. For a moment he just stood there watching. Then he threw back his head and laughed. The whole crowd grew suddenly quiet, and Bill's laughter was the only noise on the lot. It confused Walters, and he struck one right over the middle. The batsman promptly hit it for a screaming drive over second.

"Where *is* the masquerade?" asked Bill. "Do you wear that disguise for any reason? I'll bet you had to use a shoehorn to get into those pants! Ladies and gentlemen! Batteries for today's game: For St. James—Clarke, catcher; Mr. Limberger Cheese, pitcher! Oh, boy!" And he went off into another spasm of laughter.

By this time everybody was grinning except Walters. He stood there in the box waiting for Huling to finish.

After the next batter had taken three or four swings without touching the ball, Bill came to the plate and said, "Stick one over, you poor misfit!"

Walters did, and Bill hit it. Again this happened.

Walters walked halfway to the plate and said to the catcher, "You tipped off the signals to the batter twice. Don't do it again, or I'll cross you."

He didn't shout it. He just said it as easily as one might say, "Nice day, isn't it?"

Of course, Clarke denied it.

"You're crazy!" he said.

"You heard what I said," answered Walters, as cool as dew.

The next ball bounced off Clarke's protector, which was evidence enough that Walters' accusation was true.

"Take the pad," the coach said to Bunny Pierce.

Well, it didn't take long for Walters to make Bill look helpless, with Bunny on the catching job. Five times Bill swung viciously, and five times he missed. Then he stepped back, smiled, and said sweetly, "I don't want to discourage you, Walters, or I'd have hit that last one out of the lot."

To everyone's surprise, the misfit Walters answered just as pleasantly, "Oh, is that it? I thought you were waving to somebody in the outfield, the way you were swinging that bat." Then he added, "You couldn't hit anything out of the lot, you big swell-head!"

For a few seconds there was an expectant hush. Bill answered with a sneering laugh, and put his

bat in the bag. Walters went on pitching as if nothing had happened.

Coach Boles took Clarke aside and asked him about tipping Walters' signals. He denied it vehemently. Johnny Clarke and Bill were great pals. Bill Huling's people were the financial and social leaders of the town. It looked a little like Johnny might have ambitions, and be using baseball as a peg.

The next day, when the squad was changing clothes in the gym, Coach Boles asked Pierce about Walters.

"He's got everything, Coach," Pierce answered, with a knowing look.

"Well, Bunny," said he, "pitching to a squad for hitting practice is one thing. Pitching a game is something else."

"Yeh, sure. But this bird is cool and has nerve," Bunny answered.

"What makes you so sure of the nerve and coolness?" the coach asked.

"He bawled Bill out good and plenty," Bunny said with a shrug.

"Well, don't work too fast, son. Bill has pitched a lot of fine games for St. James, don't forget that. This newcomer may be all right, but he hasn't convinced me yet. Maybe Bill deserves some credit

for keeping his temper yesterday," Coach Boles said cautiously.

"You're right, of course. But Bill shouldn't ride a new guy that way unless he means to finish it. He looked bad in there yesterday after Walters bawled him out," Bunny insisted.

"Yellow, you mean?" asked the coach.

"Um—well, no, I wouldn't just say that. Bill's game, I guess, but he wasn't a sportsman yesterday, Coach, and you know it just as well as I do."

Bill had circulated a story that Jake's father was a coal miner, and said he couldn't see why Jake should be permitted to play ball on the same team with gentlemen. This gossip came to a head one evening in the gym. Jake never let on that he had heard it. He *was* a coal miner's son, and he walked three miles every morning to school, and back every night. That's nothing? Well, probably not. But there are lots of fellows who would sob over it if *they* had to do it.

"—and he's out of place on this team," were the words the coach caught as he stepped into the shower room. Jake had gone in just ahead of Coach Boles, so he couldn't have heard much more. But he never hesitated. He walked up to Bill and looked him over without a word. There wasn't a sound but the splashing of the showers.

"You think I'm out of place on this team. Well, I think the same of you. Now, listen, Mr. Huling, listen good! I'm going to be the first-string pitcher on this team within a month. Do you get that? And if I hear any more talk from you about my father being a 'drunken coal miner,' I'm going to make you eat your words. My dad is a miner. He's worked hard all his life, but he isn't a drunkard. He has to pay a lot to have me attend St. James, and no lily-fingered snob is going to roast him in my hearing and get away with it."

Bill stood facing Jake for a moment without a word. Then in a sneering voice he spoke.

"So you're going to be the first-string pitcher, are you?"

"That's what I said," answered Jake.

"You might, at that, if you wore the same make-up you had on your first day out. The opposition couldn't hit you for laughing," Bill said.

Jake smiled—a bitter, crooked sort of smile.

"I guess you won't give me any trouble," he said dryly. "A fellow that can't think about anything but clothes hasn't got enough in his think-box to worry me." And he walked off without another word.

That night Al Macklin and Bunny Pierce were taking a little stroll, and Bunny had been telling

Al about the run-in Huling had had with Jake Walters. They were right in front of Coach Boles' office when a woman came bouncing out. She was thoroughly angry; her face was flushed, and her lips were moving. But they couldn't make out anything she said.

"Bill Huling's mother," Al whispered.

"It's about Bill and his trouble with Walters, I'll bet a plugged nickel," Bunny answered.

They made a good many guesses about what Mrs. Huling had said to Coach Boles. But that's all they were—guesses. If the coach wanted a fellow to know anything, he would tell him fast enough. If he didn't—well, questioning was just a waste of time. The boys weren't foolish enough to ask him.

Several days later Bunny Pierce told Al he had heard Professor Gales, the dean, talking to Coach Boles about Huling and Walters. It seems the Dean had had both Huling and Walters in his office and tried to patch up their differences. Nothing doing.

"The Dean said Huling threatened to quit unless Walters took himself off," said Bunny.

"Well," Al said, "it looks to me as if Huling is in wrong. He can't bluff the Dean."

"Right-o!" Bunny answered.

About a week later Bunny told Al something in absolute confidence. It made him sit up and wonder.

"Nobody knows about this, you say?"

"No, not yet. But, of course, they will in a little while. You can't keep a thing like that a secret very long," said Bunny.

And Bunny was right. In less than a week the whole school was buzzing with the news that Bill Huling, the St. James social lion and best pitcher, had quit and gone over to Hull to finish his prep-school work. If he had chosen any other place, the feeling wouldn't have been so high. But Hull! You might as well wave a red flag in front of a bull. St. James hated everything in Hull. Hull returned the hatred in full, with added interest—every time she got the chance. But that wasn't any too often. St. James was just a shade too good for her in football and baseball. In track they were about an even match, and Hull had a little on St. James in basket ball.

What concerned St. James was: How good was the Hull team? Hull had lost four regulars the June before. Counting Bill Huling, they still had three vacant places, but Bill's advent had certainly given their strength a boost. There was no getting around that.

But Walters more than made up for Bill's defection. Strangely enough, he didn't seem the least bit pleased over Bill's action.

"He cheated me by running off like this," he said just after he had pitched and won from Marstone Prep. "I wanted to beat him out here."

"You'll get your chance," the coach told him. "So don't worry."

"I hope I pitch against him when we meet Hull," Walters added wistfully.

"That's a fair hope," said the coach. Then he added, "And you'll have to pitch the best ball you ever pitched to beat him."

"I know it. I'm not underestimating him. All I'm praying for is that nothing happens to Bunny Pierce. He sure is some grand catcher," he answered.

The coach took Pierce and Walters up to the Hull-Melham game to watch Huling pitch for Hull. Huling saw them in the stand, and had himself taken out.

"I don't quite get that," said Bunny. "I know everything he's got. What's the idea?"

"Maybe he's got something new," said Jake. "He's clever, you've got to hand him that."

"I don't call double-crossing your friends clever," Bunny growled.

"No," said Jake, "I didn't mean that. I meant his pitching."

The day of the game broke at last. Hull was to come to St. James, and about eleven in the morning Huling's gray roadster, with Bill at the wheel and the Hull catcher beside him, rolled into town. The rest of the team weren't scheduled until two, but long before that the home crowd began to gather, some at the station, some at the field. There was an undercurrent of feeling that was always on tap when these rivals met.

It was a perfect day for baseball. No wind, clear sky, and hot—good and hot. Hull came on the field with a band, and there was noise enough for anybody but a deaf mute.

When Huling trotted out in a Hull uniform, the air was literally crowded with cries of "Traitor!" There were other names, too, that would never get by the censor. Altogether, the prospect of excitement, and plenty of it, looked extremely good.

St. James's warm-up was certainly a pretty thing to watch. It was not big-league caliber, of course, but it would have taken more than a small college to show as much class.

"How is it?" Coach Boles asked Walters.

"All right," he said quietly—no fuss, no bluster—just easy and cool.

"Well, Huling, my son, I can see your finish," the coach said to himself.

To St. James's surprise and Hull's frenzied delight, Hull scored two runs on a scratch hit—an excusable infield error—and a two-bagger in the first inning. The infield was nervous. But Pierce was chattering away behind the bat, and Walters just smiled. He had more self-control than many a big leaguer.

The score hung right there for four innings, and all the St. James pessimists were shouting themselves hoarse and begging the team to go in there and get some runs.

In the fifth inning Hull added another run on two hits. Their rooters nearly tore the grand stand down. St. James couldn't understand it. Huling was grinning like a Cheshire cat when he walked out to the box after the last batsman was retired.

On the first ball pitched, Harold, St. James's first sacker, laid down a beautiful bunt along the third-base line. Hull's third baseman came tearing in, fumbled the ball, tried to recover it, missed it again. Finally, he stooped over and picked it up.

"Get a net!" yelled Harold, from first.

Keen, a regular kid fence buster, was next up. Did he send the ball to the outfield? He did not.

He laid down a bunt, the very twin of the one Harold had just placed. The third baseman came in and fielded it perfectly, but was just a shade late. Meantime Harold was going from first to third like a scared rabbit. There was a yell from Huling; their shortstop started for third (where he should have been as soon as the bunt was made); there was a cloud of dust, and Harold had the bag safe.

Huling pitched two waste balls to Anderson. He swung at the next; the next was a ball. Then another strike. Well, the count stood 3, and 2 on Anderson. The next was a ball, and the bases were full, with nobody out.

Huling had lost his grin by this time. He pulled himself together and struck Porter out. But he wasn't so lucky on Hallam. The first ball pitched him Hallam slapped against the right-field fence for three sacks. Noise? Well, there was some, and that's a fact. Williams struck out, but after Blackburn had hit two balls to the left-field fence that were foul by a scant two yards, Huling passed him. Then he hit Pierce, and the bases were full once more.

Even in a noisy game there is a lull occasionally. And now the noise died down when Walters came to bat.

"This ought to just about end this inning," said Huling with a sneer.

"Yes, I shouldn't be surprised," said Walters. "This will be your last inning, Mr. Judas Huling."

Huling's first offering was a "bean ball," which Walters ducked. The next was inside, high and fast. The third was a pretty strike, low and on the outside corner. Walters kept his bat on his shoulder. With the count 2 and 1, Huling tried to sneak a fast one over, but it went wild. Walters laughed.

"So you're going to walk the weakest hitter on the team with two down? You certainly are a fine, sandy ball player!" he taunted.

And that's exactly what Huling tried to do. The ball came up wide on the outside corner, and just about knee-high. It was a "ball" the instant it left Huling's hand. Did Walters wait it out? Nothing like it. He stepped across the plate and swung his bat like a golfer making a drive. He caught that ball on the "thick of the wood" with a man's size wallop. Travel? It cleared the left field fence by ten feet.

Huling's face was a study. Surprise, anger, mortification, chased one another across it in a procession. Walters trotted slowly around the paths. You could see his mouth working, and

He caught the ball on the "thick of the wood." It cleared the left field fence by ten feet

knew he was saying some pleasant things to Huling. Hear what he said? Well, hardly! The noise was enough to wake the dead. Oddly enough, Hull was cheering, too. By the time Walters reached third, Huling walked slowly toward the bench and, when he got near enough, he got a blessing from that Hull crowd. They thought he threw the game. They probably still think so. Nothing would ever convince them otherwise. Huling never stopped. He kept right on to where his gray roadster stood, climbed in and started his engine, and roared off in a cloud of dust.

Well, the game was over as far as the result was concerned. Hull put in another pitcher—a game, willing chap he was, too. But he hadn't a thing but a prayer and a glove. His support was demoralized, and St. James could have scored almost at will. They did pick up a few more runs before the ninth, more because they couldn't help it than for any other reason. Walters was simply "unhittable." In the eighth, the infielders and outfielders changed places. Pierce went to first, and Harold caught. That St. James team certainly rubbed it in.

After the game, Walters introduced a shabby-looking chap to Coach Boles. It was his father.

"You got a fine team here, Mr. Boles," he said. "And I'm glad my boy made good."

"You can thank the coach for that, Dad," said Jake. "I was pretty green when I came here."

"Oh, I ain't forgettin' it," said his father. "Any time I can do you any favor, just let me know, Mr. Boles."

"You don't owe me a thing, Mr. Walters," said the coach. "Jake made good because he worked hard and wasn't afraid to take punishment. If I taught him anything, I was paid for it."

"I'm kinda sorry for that Huling boy," said Mr. Walters. "And he's a good pitcher, too. I set right behind the plate. He's got some crooked stuff."

Three days later Bill Huling did a thing that surprised everyone. He came back to school, hunted up Jake Walters, and apologized. There was any amount of comment, but Bunny Pierce—in his usual terse style—came nearest to expressing the general feeling toward Bill.

"I thought Bill was—well, not exactly yellow—but just tinged with saffron," he said. "I guess I was mistaken. It takes sand to admit you were wrong."

MONEY ISN'T EVERYTHING

It was a raw, sloppy day in early January. None of the St. James crowd—or almost none of them—had returned from the holiday vacation, except Slim Johnson. Slim was the tennis captain, and he thought, ate, and slept "tennis." The reason he was back early was to put "jazz" into the tennis candidates. He was lounging over the magazine counter at Beeston's, and was talking to Jerry, the clerk. Jerry was attentive and patient, and all that. But the fact was that he didn't follow Slim hardly at all. Slim's talk about "early practice is just the tonic for faulty judgment of pace and accuracy" was a bit too intricate for Jerry.

Then a vermilion roadster—that is, it was vermilion where it wasn't plastered with mud—pulled up and stopped opposite the door. Something that looked like a grizzly bear got out and crossed the sidewalk. He entered the store and pulled off a visored fur cap, at the same time asking for a tin of two hundred cigarettes. His face was pasty looking, and, after a single glance, Slim gave him no attention. Persons with muddy skins and

bloodshot eyes didn't interest him. In fact, nobody interested Slim for more than a minute unless he looked like tennis material.

But when the stranger said, "My good man, is there a garage to be rented hereabouts?" Slim took another look. This "my good man" talk convinced him that here was something different. Jerry gave him an address, and the stranger waddled out without a "thank you" or anything else.

"Some car," said Jerry as the mud-spattered roadster roared off up the street.

"Yeh," answered Slim indifferently, and dismissed the stranger from his mind.

But he recalled him that night at dinner. The stranger sat opposite him, and picked at his food like an overfed cat.

"This is Mr. Johnson, the tennis captain, Mr. Selden," said Dave Garrett with a flourish.

"Delighted," said Selden, extending a fishy hand which Slim shook indifferently.

"Saw some rather good tennis at Newport last summer," Selden remarked. "Tilden and Richards, and that crowd, you know. And that Jap with the funny name. He was the best of the lot, in some ways."

"How, for instance?" Slim asked.

"Well, his form seemed the most consistent," Selden answered lazily, and he knows the psychology of the game to a dot."

Slim was interested.

"I'd never heard that," he said.

"Of course that's just my personal opinion, you know," Selden said.

"How long were you in Newport?" Slim questioned him.

"Oh, about a month, I think," answered Selden.

"Gee," said Slim, "that must have been great! I'll bet you watched those chaps every day!"

"Hardly," Selden said with a bored air. "Personally, I prefer Atlantic City. There's a lot more doing, and plenty of pretty girls. It costs more, of course, but it's worth it."

"Holy cat!" said Slim under his breath.

"Beg pardon?" asked Selden.

"I said, 'Think of that,'" answered Slim.

"Oh," said Selden.

Then the conversation ceased. After Selden had left the table, Slim turned to Dave.

"He prefers the gum chewers on the Board Walk to watching the tennis sharks of the country! What ails him, anyway?"

"Search me, old tennis hound!" Dave Garrett answered.

After a fortnight of effort Slim succeeded in getting permission to stretch canvas on a part of the gym floor. It was St. James's first year with a regular tennis team, and there was no money appropriated for indoor practice. There would be some delay until the trustees could pass on it, and still further delay until the canvas could be purchased and installed.

"And all these precious practice hours going to waste!" wailed Slim.

"Why not see your friend Selden?" asked Pepper Rogers, who was Slim's doubles partner. "He's black with money, and could buy that canvas without ever missing what it costs."

"Pep, old kid, you *have* got something under your roof! I'll admit it freely!" Slim cried, and hurried off to find Selden.

"Of course I'll do it," said Selden after listening to Slim's carefully worded speech.

He had put the matter up to Selden in a way that he (Slim) thought didn't involve any obligation. If he had seen the queer look in Selden's eyes, he might have hesitated, but he didn't. That's how this story came to be written.

"By the way," Slim remarked, "do you play tennis?"

"A little," answered Selden. "Why?"

"Well," Slim explained, "this is the first year for St. James's regular tennis team. I'm captain, and I'm naturally anxious to make the team strong and worthy and successful. If you play, I want you to come out. You see?"

"Sure," answered Selden, "but why the 'worthy' stuff?"

Slim regarded him with a puzzled look.

"You're new here, Selden, so I'm going to give you a tip. St. James gives more credit for clean sportsmanship than mere success," Slim answered.

"I don't get you," said Selden.

Slim smiled.

"Maybe you don't, now," he said, "but you will if you stick around and keep your eyes and ears open."

Selden sat looking out across the snowy street for a long time after Slim left.

"Rot!" he said to himself finally. "I've bought my way everywhere before, and I'll buy it here, too!"

In less than a week Selden began to be spoken of as "Sam," and had a following. Of course, St. James had its quota of snobs—it couldn't be otherwise. But the "regular" fellows took good care that the snobs shouldn't run anything really important. Sam Selden's teas began to cause quite

a little talk, and the vermilion roadster became a familiar sight about the campus and in front of Beeston's.

"He's a prince," said Ike Marshall, who was the champion snob at St. James.

Slim grunted.

"Tell you more when he comes out for the tennis team," he said.

"Why don't you take in one of his teas?" asked Ike. "He's invited you often enough."

"Because I've more than enough to do without chasing around to tea fights," answered Slim, "and another thing, it takes no particular brains or nerve to be a lavish entertainer on somebody else's money."

"You talk like a sorehead," Ike replied. "Just because a fellow has money is no reason to dislike him violently."

"No reason to fall on his neck and kiss him, either," Slim shot back.

Slim *was* prejudiced. He admitted it—to himself. But when Selden had come out for the tennis team, his prejudice faded somewhat. Selden could play tennis—better than Slim or Pep Rogers, either one. Ike Marshall's crowd spread the glad tidings with willing tongues. Slim was more delighted than any one, but of course Ike

and his bunch couldn't understand that. One of the strange facts about a snob is that he always regards the other fellow as a bigger snob than himself. For a week Selden worked faithfully at the tennis court. Then he suddenly dropped off. Slim waited three days, then his patience exhausted, he tramped over to Selden's rooms.

"Where've you been?" he fired at Selden.

"Right here," answered Selden lazily, pulling his purple silk lounging robe more closely about him.

"You have a good chance to make the team, Selden," said Slim, "but you'll have to work. Do you get that?"

"Of course," answered Selden, "but you don't understand quite, Johnson. I want to make the team, but I'm not going to take a chance on going stale. I know about how much work I can stand."

"Perhaps you're right," Slim admitted thoughtfully. "You see, I'm so anxious for the team's success that I'm not as tactful as I might be."

"I thought you told me that St. James was keener on clean sportsmanship than 'mere' success," Selden remarked.

"I told the truth, too," Slim answered, getting up. "Thanks, old man, for setting me right. Coming out tomorrow?"

"Guess so," replied Selden.

Selden told Ike Marshall about Slim's visit, much to that young man's delight.

"This is rich," he said. "The mighty sportsman begging you to come out and save his tennis team!"

"Save it?" Selden questioned.

"Certainly, save it," Ike replied. "Hull has a wonderful team this year. Comstock is their captain, and you know his speed. Slim Johnson needs you, Sam. Don't make any mistake about that."

"Comstock's people have money, I suppose," Selden went on.

"Not so that they're really burdened with it," Ike answered. "Why?"

"Oh, I just wondered about it, that's all," said Selden, with seeming indifference. "Probably one of these superior chaps, full of high ideas about sportsmanship, and all that."

Ike promptly forgot the subject within the hour, but Selden didn't, and, to do him justice, he gave the matter some deep thought. The result was that this thought crystallized into a feasible plan to meet Hull's captain, the speedy Comstock.

"I can't afford to let this Comstock beat me. It will be costly to fix it, but I guess it can be done," he told himself.

As the days went on, Selden worked faithfully at the indoor court, meanwhile turning over his plan time after time. It looked so promising that Selden finally decided to begin the preliminary steps. It was well along in February, and the cross-country candidates were having their first outdoor work. Their route took them past a country roadhouse some four miles out, which was no remarkable thing, but it so happened that a vermilion roadster was parked in front of this roadhouse as the runners came padding along.

"Let's go in and join the 'million-dollar kid' at tea," suggested Piggy Hollister, who loved to eat.

"We haven't any cards," Macklin remarked.

"Oh, fudge! I've forgotten my monocle!"

"And I've no topper!"

"No gentleman goes to tea unless properly gloved and hatted!"

"Right. I read that in *Vogue!*"

"Let's let the air out of his tires!"

These and similar remarks flew thick and fast, but the runners didn't alter their pace, and went on by without a pause. Selden watched them through the curtained windows.

Slim heard of it that night, and put it squarely up to Selden.

"Coach Boles is fussy about the eats," Selden

explained, "so, rather than start a row, I ran out to Flynn's. Rather a clever sort of place."

"What could I say?" asked Slim miserably some time later of Dave Garrett. "We need Selden, and I think he knows it."

"You're a fool if you let him ride you, Slim," said Dave. "You're the captain, you know."

"I'd never be able to convince myself that my feeling wasn't personal," said Slim.

Dave looked at him in a puzzled way.

"I don't make you," he said.

"It's just this," Slim explained. "Selden is a money-bug, and thinks his coin will buy him anything he wants. You and I know differently, but he doesn't. He's fast enough to make the team easily. He knows it; we know it. I have a hunch that he has something up his sleeve, and it makes me nervous. If I said anything, he'd laugh at me, and justly so, because I can't prove a thing. I don't like him personally, but I never let personal feeling enter into a thing like this. If I get sore, he may quit, and that leaves St. James in the hole. I'm in a devil of a fix."

"Oh, piffle!" answered Dave. "You worry about things that never happen. Williams is showing a lot of stuff. So is Bicknell, and so is Jones. And Gordan will make Selden step some to win.

This isn't going to be any walk-away for Mr. Dollar-sign Selden, take it from me."

"He can beat Comstock the best day he ever saw," Slim declared.

"Not on what he's shown so far," said Dave stubbornly.

"What are you trying to do, alibi Selden off the map?" Slim asked.

"I'm not fixing any soft place for him to land, I'll tell you that. His money means nothing to me," Dave snapped, and stalked off.

It wasn't exactly a surprise to have Dave suspect him, but it hurt Slim, nevertheless. Dave was a blunt, straight-driving sort, who went directly to the point without regard for anybody's feelings, not even his own. In Slim's place he would have called Selden in no uncertain terms, let the result be what it may. But, like most of St. James's captains, Slim was willing to sacrifice his own feelings to the glory of the school. Also, he would rather captain the team that defeated Hull than have a five-figure bank account.

February slipped into March, and a stretch of mild weather gave the tennis team some outdoor work. Baseball and track teams were beginning to "take the air," and the attention of St. James was divided. The split was welcome to Slim in

spite of the bull stories from Hull. Comstock and his team mates were going great. So were the St. James tennisers. Hull trimmed Preston; so did St. James. Mt. Matlac very nearly defeated Slim's crowd; but Hull knocked Mt. Matlac cold. But all the while Selden was showing splendidly. Even Dave Garrett admitted it. Coach Boles had put an end to Selden's "tea fights," and it seemed to have benefited him.

Then, with a suddenness that made Slim reel, Selden began to slip. Garrett, Bicknell, and Rogers worsted him in practice. Coach Boles ordered Selden to ease off for a week. This, coming just three weeks before the Hull match, didn't encourage Slim to any marked extent. After a week's rest Selden came back, but the old dash seemed to have shrunk.

"It's Slim Johnson and Comstock to a finish," said Pep Rogers. "The million-dollar beauty has cracked, just as we might have guessed he would."

There was a long conference one night soon after, and the next morning brought the announcement that Coach Boles thought it advisable to turn the team captaincy over to Dave Garrett. All kinds of rumors flew thick and fast—reports of a serious break between Slim and the coach, that Slim had gone stale, that Selden had refused

to play with Slim captaining the team. The simple facts in the case were these: Selden's slump looked permanent to Coach Boles; that left Slim as the only player that might stop Comstock. There was sufficient evidence that Slim's responsibilities were taking some of his fine edge. So, with Slim and the rest of the team unanimously agreeable, Coach Boles put the captain's mantle on Dave Garrett.

There was wisdom in this move, and Slim's form improved visibly within forty-eight hours. So did Selden's, much to the gratification of Ike Marshall and the "snob" crowd.

The Hull team arrived on Wednesday, a lean, finely trained aggregation. Let nobody imagine that a tennis team is a group of mollycoddles. They set, and maintain, a physical pace that would kill a lot of these parlor blacksmiths who hold tennis to be a "sissy" game.

The Hull team's practice was impressive. Even optimistic Dave Garrett had to admit that. But St. James was confident, and without the frayed nerves that frequently appear at the eleventh hour.

Friday morning dawned, still and hot.

"Made to order for me," said Selden.

And he proved it by taking Williams for a partner, and defeating Billings and Waters, the Hull pair, 6-3, 6-3.

But Bicknell and Garrett were not so lucky. They took the first set, 6-3. Garrett played like a machine, but Bicknell was nervous, and the Hull pair saw it. They played everything at him, and finally took two sets, 7-5, 7-5.

The test came in the afternoon—Johnson and Rogers vs. Comstock and Sterritt. Slim's service was as near perfect as they come. Ace after ace fell to his cannonball speed. Comstock seemed nervous, but Sterritt's defense was like a rock. Time after time he broke what seemed like a final rally. Pep Rogers hung on like a bulldog, and it was his cross-court shot that decided the first set for St. James, 8-6.

Comstock found his stride in the second brace however. His peculiar and deceiving service hopped like a spitball, and Hull had hung up four games before St. James registered a count. Pep Rogers began a smashing defense close to the net and broke through Comstock's service twice. Slim started lobbing returns that bothered Sterritt, and uncovered a weakness.

"At his feet, old top," said Slim, and Pep nodded knowingly.

Then began a cannonading at Sterritt that brought the games to four-all. Here Comstock began a change-of-pace service that quickly won

a game. Rogers double-faulted twice, and Hull took the set, 6-4.

Both teams were beginning to show the effect of the fast pace. Slim took his service game, mostly with a deceptive second ball. Comstock reverted to speed, and snared a game for Hull. Rogers lured Sterritt with two services that floated toward him tantalizingly and which Sterritt overplayed. An out by Comstock clinched the game, after Slim had driven a long half-volley to the base line. Comstock took his second service with four brilliant aces. He seemed to have caught his second wind. Then, to everyone's surprise, Pep Rogers knocked four cut services right through Hull. Then Sterritt's game went to deuce five times before a swift and lucky pass by Comstock gave Hull the edge. Slim hit a return into the net, and the games stood three-all. Slim's service looked promising, but two cuts by Rogers got him in a hole. He placed a fast service in Sterritt's court, but Sterritt shot it back for a pass, and Hull took the game.

Comstock lost two services by inches, and growled at the referee, but he evened up the score by two fast second balls. Then, with the score at 30-all, Sterritt shot a returned service down the alley on Slim's side. Slim was after the ball

like a flash, and then, in some inexplicable way, he crumpled into a heap. He tried to get up, and fell back. Pep was beside him in a second.

"What is it, Slim?" he asked, bending over.

"My ankle!" Slim muttered.

In ten seconds the court was covered with a crowd. But any hope Slim might have had to continue play was dashed by Dr. Banyard.

"Sprained—badly, too," said the doctor. "Get him over to the hospital."

The game was over as far as St. James was concerned. Garrett took Slim's place, and continued, at Hull's insistence, though of course it was Hull's match by default. Dave and Pep gave their last ounce, but Comstock and Sterritt had team play which the St. James pair lacked. They limped off with one game, and Hull took the set, 6-4.

"We're not licked yet!" St. James insisted, with the bulldog tenacity that was traditional. But, optimistic as any of them might be, Hull's edge seemed very real. For once in their lives, Ike Marshall and Dave Garrett were of one mind.

"Selden can stop Comstock," said Dave, "if he can forget money for two hours tomorrow."

"Yes," Ike answered, "and if Sam had been in there today, in Rogers' place, St. James would have won the doubles."

"Huh!" said Dave.

He had the same idea himself, but he wasn't going to agree with *every*thing Ike said. He remembered, too, that when they took poor old Slim away on a stretcher he had heard Selden humming "The End of a Perfect Day." Dave wasn't analytical, but he could put two and two together and get the answer reasonably soon.

After the game Dave went to the hospital where he found Pep Rogers with Slim.

"How's the peg?" he asked, grinning at Slim.

"Hurts like sin," answered Slim.

"You're certainly out of luck," Dave said, then he added, "But we're not licked yet."

"Think Selden can take Comstock over?" asked Slim.

"Yes, I do," said Dave. "Ike Marshall is frothing at the mouth over Selden, and he thinks I had an awful crust to take your place this afternoon."

"Wanted to see Selden in there, I suppose," said Pep Rogers.

"What gets my goat," Dave remarked, "is this foolish plugging on Ike's part. Selden is plenty fast to make the team without Ike's ravings."

"It makes Selden look sort of cheap," Slim admitted.

"Yeh," said Pep, "but Ike and Selden don't think so. These money birds are long on gall and short on sense."

"Sure," Dave answered. "They've always bought their way with money, and it's the only method they understand."

Things didn't start very well for St. James the next day. Bicknell was expected to win against Jamison, but he lost the first set before he really caught his stride. Jamison had all the luck, too, and took the second brace, 8-6. Dave Garrett, exasperated at Bick's nervousness, tore through Harter, 6-4, 6-3, and put the singles all square. Waters, Hull's supposed "weak sister," surprised Williams, and scored a 7-5, 8-6 win, and Dave groaned. Nothing better than an even break could be expected from Jones. He was a freshman, green and inexperienced. To St. James's delight however, he vanquished Billings easily by smashing everything hit to him for a 6-4 and a 6-3.

Lunch time found the singles tied again, and St. James's stock went up. Hull wasn't beaten yet, but her confidence got a rude jolt when Pep Rogers and Sterritt put on a hammer-and-tongs affair for two sets. Then Pep began to shoot at Sterritt's feet, and took the final brace, 6-3.

When Comstock and Selden took the court for the final match, Hull was jubilant. Who ever heard of Selden? A St. James freshman pitted against their veteran! It would be a cinch! Sure, this Selden and his partner had taken Billings and Waters over the day before, but they weren't Comstock's class, by a mile.

Selden began by double-faulting, but settled down and brought the game to deuce. He looked nervous, and his game was erratic; but he took it, finally. Comstock was having trouble with his first ball, and Selden killed his second shots and took game number two. He took the third also with three services, aces and an out. Hull was getting nervous. Comstock took a spurt and annexed two games. The pace was getting faster. The next game went to deuce seven times before Comstock got two successive service aces and squared the set, three-all. Selden put three aces over, but dropped a point on a cross-court return that was just out. He took the next on a second ball service that Comstock netted carelessly. Slim Johnson, in a wheel chair near the sidelines, noticed it.

"Did you see that?" he asked Pep Rogers, who sat next to him.

"Um," said Pep noncommittally.

Comstock double-faulted twice, and netted a lob that he should have killed.

"Looks fishy to me," said Pep in a whisper.

Slim nodded.

Comstock followed this with an ace, but Selden caught the next service, and passed him near the base line for the fourth point. Selden was two games to the good, and Hull was stunned. Only a lucky break for Comstock saved the set. and he edged a little nearer. Selden's service was getting faster, but so was Comstock's defense, and he cut off another game with smashing returns that passed Selden, just out of reach. Then Selden awoke, and took a game with four service aces. Comstock shook his head. A net, two outs, and a double-fault lost the game and set for Comstock.

Slim Johnson forgot about his plaster-of-paris ankle, and tried to get up. Pep Rogers pushed him back. Dave Garrett was standing at the net talking to Comstock. Slim and Pep could see their lips moving, but in the buzz of talk about them could hear nothing of the conversation. But it was a heated one; anyone could see that. Dave's eyes were snapping, and there was a white ring around his mouth. Selden joined them, and motioned Comstock back from the net.

"Take me over there!" yelled Slim, and Pep pushed the wheel chair across the court.

"Tell it," Dave was saying, "or I'll choke it out of you!"

"There's nothing to tell, man," answered Selden. "Have you gone crazy?"

Coach Boles joined them. So did the Hull coach. Questions and answers and counter-questions filled the air. In the midst of the confusion, Piggy Hollister, the cross-country captain, shouted through a megaphone, "The match is postponed!"

The coaches, Selden, Comstock, and Dave started for the gym, followed by the Hull team and Pep Rogers pushing Slim in his wheel chair. Dr. Banyard met them.

"What's this?" he asked.

Slim and Pep both tried to explain at once.

"Huh," said the doctor, "take your patient back to the hospital, Rogers, and stay with him. I'll see that the news reaches you."

It was useless to protest, and Pep trundled him off as directed. For two hours they sat on the hospital porch waiting, talking it over, then rehashing it.

"You saw Comstock slip a couple of times?" Slim asked.

Pep nodded.

"Sure," he answered, "but how are we going to prove it?"

A nurse persuaded them to come back to Slim's room. It was cool and dim in there after the bright glare outdoors. Both of them dozed, and were awakened by a voice from the hall. They looked up. Dave Garrett stood in the doorway.

"Well?" they asked in chorus.

Dave shrugged

"After three hours of discussion," said he, "the verdict is suspended. Coach Boles and Coach Pratt tried everything they knew, but we couldn't get them to admit a thing. Money has passed between Selden and Comstock, but both of 'em insist that it is a private matter. And they also insist that they were both trying to win. So we don't know any more than we did. Comstock and Coach Pratt had a run-in. Comstock said he was through with Hull, and Pratt said, 'You bet you're through!' Selden pulls out tomorrow. Ike Marshall will be wearing crêpe, I suppose."

"Pep, here, believes Comstock threw the set," said Slim.

"Sure, he threw it," Dave answered, "but we can't prove it."

"You had a lot of nerve to accuse Comstock of it," said Pep.

"I didn't accuse him," Dave replied. "I asked which he'd rather have—money or friends. He said, 'Friends, of course.' And I said, 'Then you'd better get in there and play tennis. The Hull crowd will take you apart to see what makes you go if you don't watch your foot.' Then Selden butted in. Comstock said, 'You spilled the beans, you bonehead!' I said, 'Golden beans, at that,' and Selden said 'What are you talking about?' and then you fellows got there."

"Well, I guess we ought to give thanks that we're rid of Selden," said Slim.

Pep nodded.

"Money isn't everything," he said.

"I wouldn't trade places with Selden, bum ankle and all," said Slim.

"Huh, I should think not!" said Dave. "There's not much for you to worry about except to nurse the bum ankle. You'll have to be in shape next year, Slim, because the gang have reëlected you captain."

"Well," said Pep, "that isn't any more than fair."

But Slim couldn't say anything because his gratitude choked him, and he turned his face to the wall to hide his feelings.

A BREAK IN TRAINING

Of course, John the Baptist isn't his name really. It's a nickname he received during his first year at St. James. He was keen on three things: morning chapel, where his beautiful tenor voice could be heard above all others; food—he could eat more than any two fellows in school; and sleep. It was the first of these that won him his nickname, as, of course, you've guessed.

"He's the hungriest, laziest, singiest guy I ever saw," said Jimmy Harris, who was captain of the eleven that year. "Funny thing, too, he'd rather sing hymns than anything else."

Some of the boys took him to a football rally one afternoon. As long as the songs were going, he was there 100 per cent. But afterward, when they were watching the scrimmage between the varsity and the scrub, and cheering impartially, he went sound asleep. They woke him when everything was over, and asked him how he liked it.

"Oh, all right" he said. "Seems sort of silly, this football stuff, what?"

Then he went down to the "Sugar Bowl" and ate seven chocolate éclairs in succession. As a

feeder, one had to hand the palm to John Amsden. He was fat, with a face like a full moon, and had black, straight hair. One thing was queer; he made a great hit with Peg, Jimmy Harris' wire-haired terrier. Peg was not a very friendly tyke, but she took to John enthusiastically. Jimmy was pretty busy with football and didn't pay much attention to Peg, so she drifted "into John's ponderous though sleepy arms." That last was Art Gerlock's comment; he was editor of the school paper.

John tried to be a good fellow about going to football games and mingling with the boys generally, but it wasn't in him. After the second game, when he caught a heavy cold, he cut it out entirely.

"What could he expect," asked Chuck Gray, "going to sleep with his mouth open on a damp, cold day?"

But the "teas" he used to give in his room! There was as much stuff, of as many kinds, as in a cafeteria. And John would eat most of it himself. After that, he always fell asleep, though the guests made so much noise singing and twanging the ukulele that the monitor would come up and warn them.

Things slipped along until well into January.

Everybody was back after holiday vacations, and there was very little doing at night. Most of the boys were cramming for the mid-year "exams"—all except John. He was a "shark" at his studies, and exams meant no worry in his young life. It was about that time, too, that the news leaked out that he was going to study for the ministry. Nobody seemed to know where the news started. Nor was any one surprised.

"Peg did it," said Chuck Gray. "John told her in confidence, and, girl-like, she couldn't keep the secret."

Then, one cold night, a fire alarm sounded in the dormitory. In two seconds, the halls were swarming with boys in their pajamas, carrying everything from ukuleles to baseball bats. The north wing was full of smoke, and the fire department opened up with a bang, and shot three streams on it.

John was in the Sugar Bowl drinking a few hot chocolates, when the fire truck roared past, and for once in his lazy life he left his favorite indoor pastime and followed the truck. He wasn't a fast mover, and by the time he got to the scene there were thin tongues of flame licking out of the second and third story windows. John gave one upward look and then started on the jump. A

fireman tried to stop him, but was brushed off like a fly, and John disappeared in the swirling smoke.

"The poor nut!" said Jimmy Harris. "He's run into the burning building like a panic-stricken goat!"

"And what for?" asked Billy Van Houten. "Bet there's a chocolate éclair in his bureau drawer that he suddenly remembered."

"He'd never hurry like that for one lone éclair," said Chuck Gray. "A dozen of 'em might attract him, but not just one."

"Maybe it's a bunch of letters from some Jane in his home town," said Beau Folsom, who considered John a "softie."

Just then John staggered out through the smoke, holding something in his arms. Chuck Gray and Jimmy Harris ran for him, and reached him just as he collapsed. And what do you think he was carrying? Jimmy's dog, Peg.

"I just remembered that I'd left her in my room, and the door was locked," he said. Then he fainted.

There was much confusion and running to and fro, but the news of John's rescue of the dog spread in spite of it. They dragged John into a house nearby, and a doctor brought him to in

jig time. Peg was as right as rain, because John had her wrapped in his coat.

There was a big turn-out at chapel the next morning. The fire had not been serious—only about half a dozen rooms temporarily out of commission. John's tenor voice was there clear and sure as a bell. The dean said a few words about his bravery and unselfishness. The boys all filed out, solemn on the surface, but bursting to "jolly" John and see how he would take it. But before they could get to it, Billy Van Houten jumped on the horse block at the curb and shouted, "Three rousing cheers for old John the Baptist"

And they *were* rousing cheers, to say the least. But all John said was, "Oh, rot! Any of you chaps would have done the same!"

Billy got a reprimand from the Dean for being irreverent, which he probably deserved. Anyhow, John was christened for life. Nobody ever spoke of him as anything but "John the Baptist" after that.

John took to hiking in the country with a book under his arm, and Peg at his heels. It was an early spring, and a beauty, and every fellow with an "eyecupful" of red blood was playing baseball, or tennis, or trying for the track team. John would go stalking by the field with his usual book, and

the boys would shout things at him. They couldn't put him out of humor, though, no matter what they said.

Beau Folsom watched him going by one day and said, "Going out in the country to read poetry to his sweetheart, Peg."

"It's not poetry," Billy Van Houten answered. "It's Grote's *Greece*. He's cramming on history."

"And chocolate éclairs," grunted Beau.

Then Beau went on throwing the discus. He had no reason to be vexed at John the Baptist. If an outsider had "roasted" John, Beau would have defended him like a shot. Beau's ideal of manhood had more to do with a forty-inch chest than a 7½ hat, that's all. He was captain of the track team, too, and perhaps he thought St. James's athletic honor was of more importance than a high average in the classroom. At any rate, that afternoon Ned Baker, the best broad-jumper, sprained his ankle. Beau was so disappointed he nearly wept, but he was as gentle as a lamb with Ned.

"We're through in the broad jump," said Billy Van Houten. "Hull has two men nearly as good as Ned."

"Wait a minute!" Beau answered, plucking his lips with his thumb and forefinger. He did that only when he was thinking hard.

"Well?" asked Billy, after a few seconds' wait.

"It may work," said Beau thoughtfully.

"What?" Billy questioned.

"Tell you tomorow," answered Beau, and went off to find Coach Boles.

That night after dinner, Beau said to Jimmy Harris, "Want to go on some missionary work?"

"Sure," Jimmy answered. "Where to?"

"John the Baptist."

"The dickens!" said Jimmy, surprised.

They found John and Peg in a morris chair. Beau began right away.

"John," he said, "I have a favor to ask of you."

"Fire away, old chap," John answered.

"This afternoon," Beau went on, "Ned Baker, our broad-jump star and hurdles man, sprained his ankle. He's through for this year. The Hull—St. James meet is just three weeks off. If you will take my place in the discus, I'll take Ned's in the broad jump. I'm entered in the hurdles anyway. Now, before you answer, I must tell you frankly that I've always thought you a softie. I don't know whether you feel resentful at that or not. If you do, I'm sorry. If you don't, it makes no difference. You owe something to St. James, and I feel sure you see that, without my pointing it out."

"I see it," said John, "but athletics don't make much appeal to me, and I haven't as much talent as Peg, here. Guess I'll have to support St. James in some other way."

"For instance?" asked Beau.

"Well, the debating team, for one thing," John answered.

"Tell you what, Amsden," said Beau, "come over to the training table. You can think as well on the stuff we eat as any other, I guess. How about it?"

"All right," John answered indifferently.

"I'll speak to Coach Boles in the morning," said Beau, getting to his feet.

"All right," John repeated. Then said good night.

When they were outside, Beau said, "All right," mimicking John's tone to a tick. "I'd like to kick him, the big fat mush!"

John the Baptist lasted just three days at the training table. In that time he missed practice twice because he went to sleep. The second time it happened, Coach Boles took John over to Dr. Tannehill, who gave him a thorough examination. The doctor couldn't tell the coach all about John on the spot; there were some few things that would take a little time, and Coach Boles was

as patient as could be. But John seemed as indifferent as a guinea pig, and just about as stupid.

The next day, when the coach received Dr. Tannehill's report, which showed John as sound as a hickory walking stick, he went to break the news to the Baptist. And he found him in a window seat with a box of chocolate éclairs! What a tongue lashing the coach did give him! If there's anything in the world that made Coach Boles angry, it was breaking the training rules.

"So that's your idea of training?" he asked, pointing to the half-emptied box of éclairs. "If St. James had a pastry-eating contest scheduled, you might have a chance, but I doubt it. You're too utterly selfish to train faithfully at anything. If you were just plain "yellow," we might knock it out of you. You're simply a stomach walking around, with no more will power than a jellyfish. If you ever understood anything about sacrifice, it's been so long ago you've forgotten it. There's no room at the training table for you, Amsden. We train athletes there, not gluttons. Beat it."

For just a fraction of a second there was a dash in John's lazy eyes. But it vanished when he gathered up his éclairs and slunk from the room. Of course, everybody knew about it in a little while.

"He's yellow," said Chuck Gray at table that night.

"No," Coach Boles answered, "I don't think so. Don't forget the time he went into the burning north wing of the dorm to rescue Harris' dog."

But that wasn't the general opinion. You know how it is. If a fellow slips just once, people are inclined to forget the square, plucky things he's done. Coach Boles never forgot things, though. The training table took his view of John the Baptist, and the rest of the school didn't.

And that's the way things stood when the day of the Hull games came around. The St. James baseball team had defeated Hull's nine most decisively in the morning. They were never very good losers, so they were after the track and field events from the first gong. John the Baptist sat alone in the stand, all decked out in a new palm-beach suit, and a straw hat with a loud, colorful band. One would think a fellow who was in as bad as he was, would have kept away from sporty clothes. But not John! He sat there as cool and indifferent as a polecat—and just about as popular.

The field events—hammer, shot, javelin, and discus—were run off in the order named after the dashes. Beau Folsom had taken a first in the hurdles, to Hull's surprise. It took something out

of Beau, but he felt he would have rest enough until the discus was called.

"If only that fat-faced pastry-inhaler hadn't pegged out on us," he said, "I could pass up the discus and take a shot at the broad jump with a reasonable chance to place."

"Well," said Jimmy, "the way I figure, you'd better take the discus and let the broad jump—"

Just then, a voice behind them said, "I'd like to try for the discus, Folsom, if you'll permit it."

It was John the Baptist.

It was evident that Beau was all ready to give John a "panning," but he didn't. That was one thing that made Beau a good athlete; he had self-control.

"Know anything about it?" he asked.

"A little," said John.

"Come on, we'll see Coach Boles," Beau said shortly, and they started off together.

When the discus was called, Jones and Millard were on the job; but St. James was wondering why Beau Folsom didn't warm up. John was standing around hatless, coatless, his shirt off, showing his fat neck and arms. No one took him seriously, and Hull got after John and kidded him unmercifully. There was the same lazy look in his eyes, and he seemed just as indifferent as

ever. He took a couple of warm-up throws, and Coach Boles said something under his breath.

"Never saw better form," said Beau in a low tone.

Coach Boles nodded, keeping his eyes glued on John.

A Hull athlete threw first, and got off a good cast. Then came the Baptist. He made a throw that was yards better than Hull's man had done.

"Put the tape on that!" Coach Boles barked at a clerk.

"Holy cat!" said Beau. "It's four feet better than I ever did"

Hull's entries worked their hardest to beat John's throw, but they had to be satisfied with a third. Jones had got a second by a scant few inches. When the result was announced, a confused chorus of "What do you know about that?" and "What! The éclair champion?" and "Ain't possible!" and much more went through the St. James stand. It was two minutes before the frantic cheer leaders could get a yell from the boys. As far as John the Baptist was concerned, the meet was over. He disappeared as soon as he knew he had taken first place.

St. James lost the meet by four points—not because Hull was much better, but because Beau

No one took John seriously, and Hull got after him and kidded him unmercifully

Folsom turned his ankle on the take-off in the broad jump. They didn't take a place in that event, and it lost them the meet. Beau insisted that it was only a slight wrench. It was so slight he couldn't stand up, let alone jump. There were tears in his eyes, but not from pain.

There was a dance that night at the gym, with the Hull baseball and track teams as St. James's guests. On the way over, Jimmy stopped in to see Beau, who was flat on his back, with ice bags on the wounded ankle.

"How is it, old man?" Jimmy asked.

"Oh, fair enough," Beau answered, turning his face toward the wall.

Jimmy understood. Beau Folsom was only human, like anybody else.

"John the Baptist was up here a bit ago," Beau said, after a minute.

"No?" said Jimmy, only half convinced.

Beau nodded.

"That bird has been training secretly ever since the day Coach Boles fired him from the training table," he said.

"Well," Jimmy answered, "it only goes to show how wrong you can be about a fellow. The Baptist looked downy to me, I'll admit it."

"Same here," said Beau.

"What woke him up?"

Beau grinned.

"He told me that, too," he said. "It was Peg. She turned up a grouchy old woodchuck one day when they were out in the woods. The woodchuck trimmed Peg pretty thoroughly. Two days later, they met the same woodchuck again. Peg sails into him without any hesitation, but John pulls her off. 'Peg's pride was at stake you see,' says the Baptist. 'She had to vindicate herself. And I was in the same boat myself. St. James thought me too smug and self-satisfied. It's been a valuable lesson to me Folsom.' Then he said good night."

"Well," said Jimmy, after a minute's thought, "I guess it doesn't make any difference how a fellow learns, just so he gets it."

Jimmy stopped at the Baptist's room after he left Beau, and found John asleep in his chair as usual. No, he didn't wake him because Jimmy felt that for once in his life John had earned his sleep.

Hod Williams couldn't understand why he had been elected to the captaincy of the St. James baseball team. He was a third baseman, but not a real, class A one, and he knew it. The only reason he gave himself was that he happened to be a senior. From all this, you will gather, perhaps, that he was a modest sort of chap. He was. In addition to that, he was a leader; the St. James boys had confidence in him; they knew he would give his last ounce of effort as a captain. And they were quite willing to abide by the result.

But Hod wasn't.

With the earliest of the indoor training sessions, he began to worry a little about the "prospects."

Al Macklin was forced to quit track work on account of his heart, and filled the vacancy at first base. Dave Garrett passed up tennis, and that gave St. James two catchers. There was right and center field yet to fill. Tinker, the first-string pitcher, was back; and two other box men, Henley and Cartwright, looked promising. But shortstop was a problem. Jiggs Carson, who played second, was beginning to get peevish because Coach Boles had tried four fellows at short in two days.

"I just about get used to one when the coach derricks him, and shoots in another." Carson complained.

It does make it hard for a second baseman to be switching from one shortstop to another.

"The coach would give you a permanent shortstop fast enough if he had one," Hod answered.

"Hello," said Jiggs, "who's this?"

They had just come out on the field. A newcomer was talking to Coach Boles.

"Another shortstop, I suppose," Jiggs grunted.

Jiggs was right. The newcomer was a shortstop —not "another" one, but a real one. He had entered school the second semester, lived in a boarding house (and hadn't made a dozen friends), and his name was Hiram King.

Joe Hammond was out watching the practice that afternoon. After a five-inning game—the first St. James had—Joe said, "That King boy looks mighty sweet in there at short."

"Yes," Hod said, "he did look good today. But you can't tell much from one work-out."

This was stalling, pure and simple, on Hod's part. A captain has to play safe. He didn't know but what Joe knew King, and King might be the kind that would get conceited over a little praise. But Joe wasn't convinced.

"Mebbe so, Cap," he answered. "I'd take a chance, just the same, on what he showed today. It wasn't all luck. He *knows* how to play that short field."

King kept looking better every day. In a week, he was a fixture at short, and it was a big relief to Hod.

Dillon and Potts and Fos Kelly were having a hot fight for the two outfield positions. There was so little to choose that nobody knew which two would get the place. Coach Boles's oft-repeated proverb, "A team is as strong as its substitutes," was pretty well understood (the odd man would be carried as a substitute), and everything was moving along nicely.

"It's too good to last," Hod said to Jiggs Carson. "Something is going to break."

"What's the idea of this gloom stuff?" Jiggs asked. "Just about the time I get this Hi King broken in, you begin to shoot the pessimism."

"Yes," said Fos Kelly, "you ought to have a better sense of the duties of captain. Your dope hurts the team's morale."

"It might," Hod answered, "if you fellows took it seriously."

"We know better," said Fos sweetly.

Hod was curious about King.

"But I'm not a snooper; going about poking into his history is not my dish. Guess I'd be justified—being the baseball captain—but somehow it doesn't look right," he told himself.

He let that end of it alone—for a while. The fact is, he would never have touched it if it hadn't been for Al Macklin. He came in one night and announced that Hi King was a janitor.

"I saw him carrying ashes out of old Hanford's cellar."

"Well," said Hod, "what of it? Better men have done that thing."

"It'll be a juicy morsel for the snobs," he observed.

"That doesn't worry me," Hod answered. "The snobs haven't any power in this man's school. Let 'em rave. Did you talk to him?"

"Sure," Al replied. "He told me he'd been doing odd jobs ever since he came here. Working his way through, probably. I told him that wouldn't hurt him."

"That was nice of you," said Hod. "Made him feel very comfortable, no doubt."

Al said nothing for a minute. He was studying Hod with a queer look. Then finally. "The trouble with you on this snob question is that you lean backward. King is a good guy, but carrying

ashes doesn't make him any better. And he wouldn't necessarily be any worse if he didn't have to work his way. You seem to think it's your duty to hurrah for every horny-handed toiler, and smirk disdainfully at everyone else."

"I hate a snob," Hod admitted. "Far as hurrahs go, I'm pretty careful. And these disdainful smirks are not my dish, and you know it."

Al thought Hod was "rooting for the low-brows," though he did not give expression to the thought.

"Ever notice his clothes?" he asked suddenly.

"No, not particularly."

"Well, they're good stuff, and well tailored, but almost threadbare. That mean anything to you?"

"I'm no haberdashery expert," Hod replied.

Al grinned. "Here's the dope, as I read it: King is, or was, used to money, lots of it. Something slipped. Now he carries ashes."

"All right, Al," Hod replied, "let's let it go at that. He can play shortstop. That's what interests me."

It wouldn't have been human for Hod not to remember Al's comments about Hi King. Al was a keen observer, Hod had to admit that. But he couldn't see why clothes should have any bearing on Hi's value as a ball player.

St. James went through three games without a slip, and the team was going well enough to please Coach Boles, and that's saying something. Then came the Marstone game. The St. James team was to visit Marstone this year, and, for some unknown reason Marstone was entertaining with a dance after the game. The boys were talking about it on Friday afternoon in the gym. Practice was over, and they would catch an early morning train for Marstone.

"Marstone is going to put on a fussy party," said Fos Kelly; "soup-and-fish clothes, and girls, and everything."

Hod flashed a look at Al, and Al looked at King. He gave no sign. Al couldn't tell whether he had caught the significance of Fos's remark. There was a lot of talk about the things Fos mentioned. Al kept watching King, until Hod finally said in an undertone, "Shift your gaze. Haven't you any manners?"

Al mumbled something about shortstopping in evening clothes.

When they got outside, Hod told him he didn't care much for his talk.

"Don't be sore, old-timer," Al said, clapping him on the shoulder. "I guess my staring was a bit ill bred, but I didn't mean it that way."

"I know, Al," said Hod.

Down below his sarcasm Al was white, and Hod knew it. They were rooming in Fellowship Dorm, and Al began digging around in his closet the moment they got there.

"What's the idea? Spring house cleaning?" Hod asked.

"I've an extra Tux," he answered. "King might as well have it. But how to get it to him—that's the question."

"You poor fish!" Hod exclaimed. "If you take that suit up to King, I hope he throws it in your face."

"You honestly hope that?" he asked seriously.

"Of course," Hod replied. "Wouldn't you, if you were in his place?"

Before Al could answer, there was a knock on the door.

"Come in," said Hod.

It was King. He said "Hello" in a shamefaced, sort of way, as if he were embarrassed. Hod pulled up a chair and acted as natural as he could. But there was a strain in the air.

"We were just speaking of you," Hod said. "You see, Al here has a bum heart, and he wondered if you'd accept his Tux for the dance tomorrow night."

"So you've counted yourself out on the dance?" Hi asked, looking at Al.

"Well, yes," Al answered.

"I guess if the heart's good enough to play ball, it'll last through the dance," Hi remarked tersely.

"You can believe it or not, King," said Al, "but I'm off this dancing stuff. And you're welcome to the open-faced clothes."

A queer look came into Hi's face.

"It's white of you chaps," he said, "and you guessed right about my not having a Tux. It's gone, with—some other things."

He was silent for a second. Then in a different tone he said, "I came up here tonight to ask you to excuse me, Williams, from this dance. I can catch that night train home."

"Nothing like it," Al cut in. "You and I, King, go to this dance in our street clothes. If the snobs at Marstone don't like it, they can go jump in the lake."

Before Hi could answer, Hod said, "That being the case, I'm off the soup-and-fish, too. What's the use of being a senior if you haven't any privileges?"

King smiled—a real smile, this time.

"That's mighty square of you fellows," he said. Then he added, "You know, I'm keen on dancing."

After he had gone, Al said, "That was a consistent play you made, you poor nut! And after your talk about hoping King would throw my clothes in my face!"

"Well," Hod retorted, "I guess it wasn't any sillier than your advising the snobs at Marstone to go jump in the lake."

"This King has been handed a raw one," Al said thoughtfully.

"Stay off!" Hod warned him. "No Sherlock Holmes stuff. If King has a secret, let him keep it. Don't go poking around just to gratify your curiosity."

"Your ignorant yap bores me," was the reply. "Let's go over and shoot a game of Kelly pool, stupid."

St. James defeated Marstone, 6 to 3. Al went to sleep once with the ball in his hand while a Marstone runner scored from third. When they came into the dugout, he said, "The needle, Watson!" and grinned at Hod.

The boys all laughed, but Hod was the only one who really understood.

Marstone gave them a good dance, and King was in the thick of it. So was Al, for that matter. The Marstone crowd didn't seem to notice their street clothes. Coach Boles gave Hod a queer

smile when Hod said, rather offhandedly, that his Tux was full of moth holes.

St. James had an easy game the next week, and the coach sent Al and Hod over to Walnut Hill to scout Hull. Nothing unusual happened until they had started back to St. James. For some reason, the chair car was pretty full, but a good-natured conductor sold them seats in the smoker. There was only one other occupant in it, a gray-haired, keen-looking chap, with deep-set eyes and a snapping-turtle mouth. Al lit his pipe and blew out a cloud of smoke. As they discussed the game they had just seen, the stranger would give them a look now and then, over the top of his newspaper. He was a baseball fan, it was evident. It wasn't long before he laid his paper down.

"Couldn't stand it any longer, eh?" Al asked with a disarming grin.

"I'm a fan, all right," the stranger admitted. "Where do you chaps come from?"

Al told him, and introduced himself, and then Hod.

"My name is Winston," the stranger said.

"Player?" Al asked.

"Yes," Mr. Winston answered, "shortstop. But I haven't played for nearly twenty years."

"Our shortstop is a wiz," Al remarked. "It would do your heart good to see him work. Fast, brainy, good hitter, dangerous base runner. Shouldn't be surprised if he went into professional ball."

"I had the impression that St. James catered to the wealthier classes," Mr. Winston commented.

"Well, that may be true," said Al, "but it would welcome any fellow of King's class. He seems to be working his way—cleaning out cellars, mowing lawns, and that sort of thing. He's seen better days, the way I dope it out."

"Is he popular?" asked Mr. Winston.

"Not yet, but soon," Al replied. "You see, this is his first year at St. James. His ball playing will make a place for him. Besides, he's a nice, clean kid."

"St. James is to be congratulated," Mr. Winston said. "I had an idea somehow that it was a snob school. I'm glad to know they recognize merit for its own sake."

"Seems a pity this shortstop's people don't share the same view," said Al in a cutting tone. "King's dad is probably some bloated old money-grubber with a hard will and a flinty heart. Well, whoever and wherever he is, he needn't worry about King. This boy will get on, not because of his father,

but in spite of him. I wonder what the old coot's thoughts are when he lies in bed at night staring up into the dark? I wouldn't trade places with him for all his rotten money."

"Neither would I," said Mr. Winston.

He got off the train soon after.

"We play Hull in two weeks," Al told him as they said good-by. "I'd like to have you come up for the game."

"I might, at that, and thank you," Mr. Winston said, and waved his hand to them from the platform.

"What was the idea in busting off to a stranger the way you did?" Hod asked, as the train began to move. "You don't suppose Hi wants you to spill such stuff at large, do you?"

"That was Hi's dad," Al announced quietly.

For a moment Hod was stunned. Then reason returned.

"Explain," he said.

"It's simple enough," said Al. "His suitcase is marked *H. K. W.;* so is King's, only the *W* has been scratched out. I saw it last Saturday—took a good, long look, too."

Hod laughed.

"I don't suppose there could be more than two people in the whole United States with the same

initials," he scoffed. "The keeper had best prepare the padded cell for you."

After a while Al seemed to see some of his folly—but not all of it. He clung to this scratched-letter-on-Hi's-suit-case idea.

"Listen, idiot," Hod said. "Next time I see you with a detective story, you get fired off the team."

The Hull game was a "corker." Hull's pitcher was too good for St. James for eight innings—"unhittable," it seemed. Hull had scored one in the second, and by the time St. James came to bat in the ninth that one looked like a dozen. Al fouled out, but Potts nicked the Hull pitcher for a single over short. On the hit-and-run, Tinker grounded to third. The peg to second was late, and both runners were safe. A moment later Tink was caught off first, and he protested so loudly that the umpire banished him from the game. Jiggs Carson pasted the first ball to center for a double, scoring Potts. But the riot of cheering stopped suddenly when Jiggs was nipped at third trying to stretch his hit.

The cheering began again in a few seconds, for the score was tied. St. James got a runner on in the tenth, but he died at second. Both teams went down in order in the eleventh. Cartwright, who

went in to pitch after Tinker was dismissed, wabbled a little in the twelfth. But Carson killed Hull's rally by a wonderful running pick-up and throw. St. James made a strong bid in their half of the twelfth—a bid that fell short by a poor slide to the plate.

It was the thirteenth that did for St. James. Hull had a runner on third, with two down. The batsman hit a fast one to King's left, just the kind he liked. He would kill it. But he didn't. The ball took a funny hop, and Hi never touched it. Hod cut in behind, grabbed the ball, and made a pretty throw, but the damage was done. St. James tried everything they knew in their half. It wasn't enough.

They were very quiet in the shower room. In fact, the running water was about the only noise there was, until King sobbed, and tried to make it sound like a cough. Hod went over to him and put a hand on his shoulder.

"Buck up, old kid," he said. "I know how tough you feel. That'll pass. It wasn't your fault."

Al had dressed and got out in a hurry. Nobody wasted any time, as far as that went. None of them, that is, but King. He dawdled around, killing time. Hod knew why. He wanted everybody under cover before he bolted for his room. Hod

had seen a good many fellows that way. Then suddenly the door opened, and Al came in. He looked at them, and around the room. Then he went back to the door and said, "All right. Come on in."

A man came through the doorway. He paused for a second, then he came toward Hi.

"Son!" he cried.

"Hello, Dad," Hi answered, trying to keep his voice steady.

Then the man's arms went round him, and Hi hid his face on his dad's broad chest. Al and Hod beat a hasty retreat. Outside, they ran into Mr. Winston.

"Well, this *is* a surprise," Hod said, shaking hands with him.

"Yes," said Mr. Winston. "Al, here, sent me a special invitation," and he grinned at Al knowingly.

"Al thought you were Hi's father," said Hod.

"Yes," Mr. Winston answered, "he said as much to me a while ago. He had a lot of nerve that day on the train." Then he added with a sly grin, "He called me a bloated old money-grubber."

Hod laughed. So did Al—a little.

"Well," Hod said, "I guess Al's talk did some good."

"It certainly did," Mr. Winston explained. "Hi's dad and I are old friends. Al's story lost nothing the way I repeated it to him, you can believe me. Hi, Junior, is a little self-willed—he quarreled with his father. Hi, Senior, was at fault, too."

"Here they come now," said Al.

Mr. Winston introduced them to Mr. Walker.

"Walker?" Hod said, stupidly.

"Sure," said Al. "Don't you remember I told you there was a *W* scratched off Hi's suit-case?"

"King is his middle name," Mr. Winston said.

"No, it isn't," Hod observed. "His middle name is Shortstop."

Hi's father and Mr. Winston entertained the boys for two hours with reminiscences of their school days. Their talk made some of the boys' adventures look pretty tame. Mr. Winston remained all night with Al and Hod. They took him to the station the next morning.

"Boys," he said, "I've had a fine time. It's done me a lot of good. To see Hi and his boy reconciled is great. I'm glad I had a part in it. What do you fellows plan to do?"

They told him. Al was going to Cornell. Hod hoped to go also. Mr. Winston gave them his address.

"Next time you're in Philadelphia, look me up," he said.

They promised gladly. He was a regular fellow.

The boys walked slowly back from the station. It was hot, and the deep shade under the grand old maples on the campus seemed to get them by the throat. They wondered where they would be next year. They hadn't realized before how deep a place St. James held in their consciousness. They knew suddenly why they had always done their best to win, why their loyalty had been so constant. Mr. Winston had said, "You'll never forget your school days, no matter where you go nor how old you get. You'll remember."

And he was right. They did.

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